Royal Canadian Edition

The Works

of

Honoré de Balzac

XXXVII

César Birotteau

The Middle Classes

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INTRODUCTION*

[*Histoire de la Grandeur et de la Décadence de César Birotteau* appeared in December, 1837, in two-volumes 8vo. It was divided into three parts, since reduced to two, and into sixteen chapters, since suppressed. Another edition was published in 1839; in 1844 the novel entered the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne" of the "Comedy," although it was at first intended for the "Études Philosophiques." In its first form it was used as a premium or bonus by the *Figaro* and *L'Estafette*. Many of its numerous characters are found elsewhere. The hero is mentioned in "Un Ménage de Garçon" and "La Maison du Chat-qui-Pelote"; his daughter and Anselme Popinot in "Les Parents Pauvres"; Mme. Birotteau nowhere else. The Abbé François Birotteau recalls "Le Curé de Tours" and "Le Lys dans la Vallée." Chiffreville and Protez sold chemicals to Balthazar Claës ("La Recherche de l'Absolu"). Claparon recalls "Melmoth Réconcilié" and will play a part in "Les Petits Bourgeois" (see also "Un Ménage de Garçon" and "Un Homme d'Affaires"). Crevel has been seen in "Les Parents Pauvres" (see further "Le Député d'Arcis"). Alexander Crottat has been met in "La Femme de Trente Ans," "Le Colonel Chabert," and elsewhere. Bianchon, Camusot, Cardot, Finot, the Illustrious Gaudissart, Gobseck, Granville, Grindot the architect, Matifat, the Nucingens, du Tillet, Félix de Vandenesse are all familiar. Bidault (Gigonnet) recalls

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especially "Les Employés," as do also La Billardière, Mitral, and M. and Mme. Rabourdin. The Desmarets recall "Ferragus" ("Histoire des Treize"); the Fontaines, "Le Bal de Sceaux"; the Guillaumes and the Lebas, "La Maison du Chat-qui-Pelote"; as also Mme. Sommervieux and both the Roguins, who are also made use of in other books. Sarah van Gobseck (la belle Hollandaise), niece of the usurer and mother of Esther, has been mentioned in "Splendeurs et Misères" and elsewhere. The Kellers are not infrequently mentioned (see, for example, "Le Député d'Arcis"), but play by no means so important a part in the "Comedy" as Nucingen. The Abbé Loraux recalls "Un Début dans la Vie," "Un Ménage de Garçon," and "Honorine." Molineux is mentioned in "Une Double Famille" and "La Bourse." Pillerault recalls "Le Cousin Pons," Judge Popinot "L'Interdiction," Lourdois "La Maison du Chat-qui-Pelote." Dr. Haudry is not so famous as Bianchon or Desplein, but has been met in "Ferragus" and elsewhere. La Mère Madou and other minor characters do not reappear.

Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan appeared first in *La Presse*, August 20-26, 1839, under the title, "La Princesse Parisienne." It was issued the next year under the same title in a miscellany, "Le Foyer de l'Opera." In 1844, with its eight chapter divisions suppressed, and with its present title, it entered the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne" of the "Comedy." Its characters are so familiar as to need practically no remarks. D'Arthez and Michel Chrestien were prominent in "Illusions Perdues," and the former will be met again in "Le Député d'Arcis." The Princess (Diane de Maufrigneuse) has been important in "Le Cabinet des Antiques" and "Splendeurs et Misères." She is made use of in half a dozen other stories. Mme. d'Espard, the Chevalier, Rastignac, Blondet, and Mme. de Montcornet suffice to show how completely Parisian the setting of the novelette is.]

Balzac was taking up and putting down "César Birotteau" for three or four years before he finally completed it. In April, 1834, he writes to Mme. Hanska that he is composing a most important book, "César Birotteau"—brother of the Abbé she knows—a "victim like his brother, but victim of Parisian civilization, whilst his brother is only the victim of a single man. It is *Le Médecin de Campagne,* but at Paris; it is Socrates *bête,* drinking, in obscurity and drop by drop, his hemlock; the angel trampled under foot; the honest man misunderstood. Ah! it is a great picture; it will be grander, more vast" than what he has hitherto accomplished. In November, 1837, he writes: "They offer me 20,000 francs for *César Birotteau* if it is ready by the tenth of December; I have a volume and a half to do, and poverty has made me promise. I shall have to toil during twenty-five nights and twenty-five days." He begins his next letter (December 20, 1837): "I have just finished in twenty-two days, as I had promised and as I wrote you hurriedly at the end of my last letter, *César Birotteau.* In the same time I have done *La Maison Nucingen* for *La Presse.* It is enough to tell you that I am played out (*abattu*), in a state of inexpressible exhaustion (*annéantissement*)." A month later the natural reaction follows, and he has "the most profound disgust" for his novel. Shortly after, however, he is glad to write that "César Birotteau" after two months of *incognito* is obtaining an enthusiastic success." Notwithstanding the silence of the newspapers and the malevolence of certain persons, it is being extolled to the clouds and put above "Eugénie Grandet," with which people have assassinated so many things of his. He writes such trifles because he knows Mme. Hanska attaches importance to them. Nearly two years later, in connection with "Pierrette," he recalls the fact that he corrected "César Birotteau" seventeen times in the proof-sheets!

Was the novel worthy of such pains? Did Balzac succeed in

making a great picture of a modern, obscure Socrates drinking his hemlock? Is "César Birotteau" to be ranked above "Eugénie Grandet"?

The last question will be almost unanimously answered in the negative; the other two have been answered both affirmatively and negatively. On the whole, however, it seems fair to conclude, that the novel, although not a masterpiece, does not represent time and labor wasted, and that César, although not a Socrates, is a pathetic and moving character.

It is needless to say that in dealing with money difficulties and bankruptcy, Balzac was treading ground unfortunately familiar to him, and that he displays remarkable knowledge of business methods and of commercial law. The complimentary remark made by the French lawyer to Mme. Surville is often quoted; but praise of this sort cannot conquer the prejudices of readers who prefer novels that have to do with divorce and criminal rather than with commercial courts—who, in other words, prefer romantic to realistic fiction. It is almost equally needless to remark that in describing the modes of thought and action of the bourgeoisie Balzac was completely in his element, and that although he strove manfully and successfully to do justice to his good characters, he could not help frequently showing the contempt he felt, as a literary artist, for the shopkeepers who were amassing wealth and absorbing political power, neither of which they knew how to use for any good purpose.

It is easy to conclude that if "César Birotteau" fails of being a masterpiece, it is not because Balzac did not have his main theme well in hand. Nor is it clear that such a theme, sordid and uninteresting as some may deem it, is greatly inferior to that of "Eugénie Grandet." We are, therefore, led to consider his handling of his characters and scenes, and we shall probably find that the reason we cannot place "César Birotteau" alongside of "Eugénie Grandet" and "Père

Goriot" is that its characters and scenes do not take the firmest of holds upon our hearts and our imaginations. César is well portrayed and his piety and probity do him honor, but his weakness and narrowness detract from our admiration. His wife and daughter and young Popinot are worthy of our regard, and get it, but we are scarcely enthusiastic over them. Their good friends and neighbors are excellent but not inspiring persons, with the exception of Pillerault, who is a very strong character. Nor are the bad characters—du Tillet, the Roguins, Molineux, Claparon—superlative villains that dominate our imaginations. Then, too, while there are some effective scenes, there are seemingly few, besides that in which César recites the Lord's Prayer, that can be called distinctly fine. In short, "César Birotteau," excellent novel though it seems to some of us to be, does not, we must repeat, impress our imaginations profoundly, and thus is not entitled to a place among its author's masterpieces.

Yet, viewed in detail, it is found to be full of merits. The opening, with its description of Mme. Birotteau's dream, is better than is usual with Balzac, who rarely takes the trouble to interest his reader at the start. The picture of Molineux, the proprietor sticking for his rights, is one of the best to be found in the "Comedy." Pillerault has been already praised, but it may be noted that in him the monarchical Balzac has painted a noble republican worthy to be set by General Hulot ("Les Chouans," "La Cousine Bette") and Père Niseron ("Les Paysans"). So far as concerns realistic scenes, it would be difficult to name a better one than that in which César and Popinot interview Vauquelin on the subject of the hair-oil. César's essentially bourgeois character is also well brought out when he blunderingly draws upon himself the full force of du Tillet's wavering vengeance. As for the famous ball, the interviews of poor César with his creditors and the bankers, the rising and falling of Mère Madou's

temper, and above all the absolute life-likeness of the discussion with regard to the sending out of the invitations—it is surely needless to commend these things to the attention of the reader.

In conclusion we may ask whether or not those critics are right who consider it unlikely that a man who had attained César's commercial standing should have displayed such a want of prudence as Balzac has attributed to his hero. Answers to this question will doubtless vary, but it should be noted that the perfumer would probably not have got his start if the ablest and best men of his epoch had not been engaged in fighting Napoleon's battles, and that social ambition has turned wiser heads than Birotteau's. It will be more to our purpose to ask whether those persons who allege Balzac's propensity to give the battle to the strong and wicked have taken this novel sufficiently into account. The good characters distinctly outnumber the bad ones, and du Tillet's vengeance is thwarted in its most essential particular.

On July 15, 1839, Balzac wrote Mme. Hanska: "I have just given a last look at *Une Princesse Parisienne;* it is the greatest moral comedy that exists. It is the mass of falsehoods by means of which a woman of thirty-seven, the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, become Princess de Cadignan by succession, manages to get herself taken for a saint, a virtuous woman, a modest young girl, by her fourteenth admirer; it is, in short, the last degree of depravation in the matter of the sentiments. It is, as Mme. de Girardin was saying, *Célimène amoureuse.* The subject is of all countries and of all times. The master-stroke is to have made the falsehoods appear just, necessary, and to justify them through love. It is one of the diamonds in the crown of your servant."

Perhaps we must qualify these rapturous expressions of Balzac's about one of the best and subtlest studies of feminine character to be found in the "Comedy"; but it will hardly be

necessary to add anything to them. It will readily appear that if the Duchess de Langeais is our author's greatest coquette, the Princess de Cadignan is his greatest actress. The comedy in which she takes the chief rôle may not altogether suit Anglo-Saxon readers, but its *vis comica* is undeniable, and its truth to nature is less questionable than may at first appear. It should be noted that d'Arthez is in many particulars the kind of student and writer that Balzac loved to pose as, especially in his correspondence with Mme. Hanska and his friends.

W. P. TRENT.

THE RISE AND FALL OF CESAR BIROTTEAU

Retail Perfumer,
Deputy-Mayor of the Second Arrondissement, Paris, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, etc.

To Monsieur Alphonse de Lamartine,
from his admirer,

De Balzac.

I.

CESAR'S APOGEE

THERE is but one brief interval of silence during a winter night in the Rue Saint-Honoré; for to the sounds of carriages rolling home from balls and theatres succeeds the rumbling of market gardeners' carts on their way to the Great Market. During this pause in the great symphony of uproar sent up by the streets of Paris, this cessation of traffic towards one o'clock in the morning, the wife of M. César Birotteau, of the retail perfumery establishment near the Place Vendôme, dreamed a frightful dream, and awoke with a start.

She had met her double. She had appeared to herself, clad in rags, laying a meagre, shriveled hand on her own shop-door handle. She had been at once in her chair at the cash desk and on the threshold; she had heard herself begging; she had heard two selves speaking in fact, the one from the desk, the other from the doorstep. She turned and stretched out her hand for her husband, and found his place cold. At that her terror grew to such a pitch that she could not move her head, her neck seemed stiffened to stone, the walls of her throat were glued together, her voice failed her; she sat up

rigid and motionless, staring before her with wide eyes. Her hair rose with a painful sensation, strange sounds rang in her ears, something clutched at her heart though it beat hard, she was covered with perspiration, and yet shuddering with cold in the alcove behind the two open folding doors.

Fear, with its partially morbific effects, is an emotion which puts so violent a strain upon the human mechanism, that the mental faculties are either suddenly stimulated by it to the highest degree of activity, or reduced to the last extremity of disorganization. Physiology has long been puzzled to account for a phenomenon which upsets its theories and stultifies its hypotheses, although it is simply and solely a shock brought about spontaneously, but, like all electrical phenomena, erratic and unaccountable in its manifestations. This explanation will become a commonplace when men of science will recognize the great part played by electricity in human thinking power.

Mme. Birotteau was just then enduring the pangs which bring about a certain mental lucidity consequent on those terrible discharges when the will is contracted or expanded by a mysterious mechanism. So that, during a lapse of time, exceedingly short if measured by the tickings of a clock, but incommensurable by reason of the infinite rapid impressions which it brought, the poor woman had the prodigious power of uttering more thoughts and of calling up more memories than would have arisen in her mind in its normal state in the course of a whole day. Her soliloquy during this vivid and painful experience may be resumed in a few words she uttered, incongruous and nonsensical as they were:—

"There is no reason whatever why Birotteau should be out of bed.—He ate so much veal; perhaps it disagreed with him. —But if he had been taken ill, he would have waked me up. —These nineteen years that we have slept here together under this roof, he has never got up in the middle of the night without telling me, poor dear!—He has never slept out except when he was on guard.—Did he go to bed when I did? Why, yes. Dear me! how stupid I am!"

She glanced over the bed. There lay her husband's night-cap, moulded to the almost conical shape of his head.

"Can he be dead?—Can he have made away with himself?—Why should he?" she thought. "Since they made him deputy-mayor two years ago, I haven't known what to make of him.—To get mixed up with public affairs, on the word of an honest woman, isn't it enough to make you feel sorry for a man?—The business is doing well.—He has just given me a shawl.—Perhaps it is doing badly!—Pshaw! I should know of it if it were.—But is there any knowing what is in the bottom of a man's mind? Or a woman's either? There is no harm in that.—Haven't sales amounted to five thousand francs this very day!—And then a deputy-mayor is not likely to kill himself; he knows the law too well for that.—But where can he be?"

She had no power to turn her head; she could not stretch out a hand to the bell-rope, which would have set in motion a general servant, three shopmen, and the errand boy. The nightmare that lasted on into her waking moments was so strong upon her that she forgot her daughter, peacefully sleeping in the next room, beyond the door which opened at the foot of the bed.

"Birotteau!" She received no answer. She fancied that she had called aloud, but, as a matter of fact, she had only spoken in her thoughts.

"Suppose he should have a mistress? But he has not wit enough for that," she thought, "and then he is too fond of me.—Didn't he tell Mme. Roguin that he had never been unfaithful to me, even in thought?—Why, the man is honesty itself!—If any one deserves to go to heaven, he does.—What he finds to say to his confessor, I don't know. He tells him make-believes.—For a Royalist as he is (without any reason to give for it, by the by), he does not make much of a puff of his religion.—Poor dear, he slips out to mass at eight o'clock as if he were running off to amuse himself on the sly. It is the fear of God that he has before his eyes; he does not trouble himself much about hell. How should he have a

mistress? He keeps so close to my apron-strings that tired of it. He loves me like the apple of his eye; he w put out his eyes for me.—All these nineteen years he never spoken a harsh word to myself.—I come before daughter with him.—Why, Césarine is there . . . (Cesa Césarine!)—Birotteau never has a thought that he does tell me.—It was a true word he said when he came to the of the *Little Sailor* and told me that it would take tim know him. And he's gone! . . . that is the extr dinary thing!"

She turned her head with an effort, and peered into darkness. Night filled the room with picturesque eff the despair of language, the exclusive province of the pai of genre. What words could reproduce the whimsical sh that the curtains took as the draught swelled them, or startling zigzag shadows that they cast? The dim ni light flickered over the red cotton folds; the brass rosett the curtain-rest reflected the crimson gleams from a cen boss, bloodshot like a robber's eyes; a ghostly gown was kn ing there; the room was filled, in fact, with all the stra unfamiliar appearances which appall the imagination a time when it can only see horrors and exaggerate them.

Mme. Birotteau fancied that she saw a bright light in next room, and a thought of fire flashed across her; but caught sight of a red bandana handkerchief, which loo to her like a pool of blood, and in another moment she covered traces of a struggle in the arrangement of the fur ture, and could think of nothing but burglars. She reme bered that there was a sum of money in the safe, and a g erous fear extinguished the cold ague of nightmare. Th oughly alarmed, she sprang out on to the floor in her nig dress, to go to the assistance of the husband whom she fanc as engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with assassins.

"Birotteau! Birotteau!" she cried in a voice of angui

The retail perfumer was standing in the middle of t adjacent room, apparently engaged in measuring the with a yard stick. His dressing-gown (of green cotto

with chocolate-colored spots) covered him so ill that his bare legs were red with the cold, but he did not seem to notice this.

When César turned round with a "Well, what is it, Constance?" he looked as a man absorbed by his schemes is apt to look—so ludicrously foolish, that Mme. Birotteau began to laugh.

"Dear me, César, how queer you look!" said she. "What made you leave me alone without saying anything? I nearly died of fright. I did not know what to think. What are you after, open to every wind that blows? You will catch your death of cold. Birotteau! do you hear?"

"Yes, wife; here I am," and the perfumer returned to the bedroom.

"There, come along and warm yourself, and tell me what crotchet you have in your head," returned Mme. Birotteau, raking among the ashes, which she hastily tried to rekindle. "I am frozen. How stupid was of me to get up in my night-dress! But I really thought you were being murdered."

The merchant set down the bedroom candlestick on the chimney-piece, huddled himself in his dressing-gown, and looked about in an absent fashion for his wife's flannel petticoat.

"Here, pussie, just put this on," said he. "Twenty-two by eighteen——" he added, continuing his soliloquy. "We could have a magnificent drawing-room."

"Look here! Birotteau, you seem to be in a fair way to lose your wits. Are you dreaming?"

"No; I am thinking, wife."

"Then you might wait; your follies will keep till daylight at any rate," cried she, and, fastening her petticoat under her sleeping jacket, she went to open the door of their daughter's room.

"Césarine is fast asleep. She will not hear a word. Come, Birotteau, tell me about it. What is it?"

"We can give the ball."

"Give a ball! *We* give a ball! My dear! on the word of an honest woman, you are dreaming!"

"Dreaming? not a bit of it, darling.

"Listen; you should always do your duty according to your station in life. Now the Government has brought me into prominence, I belong to the Government, and it is incumbent upon us to study its spirit and to forward its aims by developing them. The Duc de Richelieu has just put an end to the occupation of the Allied troops. According to M. de la Billardière, official functionaries who represent the city of Paris ought to regard it as a duty—each in his own sphere of influence—to celebrate the liberation of French soil. Let us establish beyond proof a genuine patriotism which shall put those accursed schemers that call themselves Liberals to the blush, eh? Do you think that I do not love my country? I mean to show the Liberals and my enemies that to love the King is to love France!"

"Then do you think that you have enemies, my poor Birotteau?"

"Why, yes, we have enemies, wife. And half our friends in the quarter are among them. They all say, 'Birotteau has such luck; Birotteau was once a nobody, and look at him now! He is deputy-mayor; everything has prospered with him.' Very well; there is a nice disappointment still in store for them. You should be the first to hear that I am a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; the King signed the patent yesterday!"

"Oh! well then, dear, we must give the ball," cried Mme. Birotteau, greatly excited. "But what can you have done so great as to have the Cross?"

Birotteau was embarrassed.

"When M. de la Billardière told me about it yesterday," said he, "I asked myself, just as you did, what claim I had to it. But, after thinking it over, I saw that I deserved it, and ended by approving the action of the Government. To begin with, I am a Royalist, and I was wounded at Saint-Roch in Vendémiaire; it is something, isn't it, to have borne arms for the good cause in those times? Then some of the merchants think that the way I discharged my duties as arbitrator at the Consular Tribunal had given general satisfac-

tion: and lastly, I am a deputy-mayor, and the King is distributing four Crosses among the municipal authorities in the city of Paris. After they had gone into the claims of the deputy-mayors for a decoration, the Prefect put me down at the top of the list. The King, too, is sure to know my name; thanks to old Ragon, I supply him with the only hair powder he will use; no one else has the recipe for the powder the late Queen used to wear, poor dear august victim! The Mayor backed me up with all his might. What was I to do? If the King gives me the Cross when I don't ask him for it, it looks to me as if I could not decline it without failing in respect. Was it my doing that I was made a deputy-mayor? So as we have the wind in our sails, wife, as your uncle Pillerault says when he is in a joking humor, I have made up my mind that we must live up to our high position. If I am to be somebody, I will have a try at being whatever Providence meant me to be; a sub-prefect, if such is my destiny. And you make a great mistake, wife, when you imagine that a citizen has discharged all the duty he owes his country when he has supplied his customers with scent across the counter for a score of years. If the State demands the co-operation of our intelligence, we are as much bound to give it, as to pay succession duty, or the door and window tax, *et cetera*. Do you want to sit at your desk all your life? You have been there a pretty long time (God be thanked). The ball will be a private fête of our own. No more of the shop; for *you*, that is. I shall burn the signboard *The Queen of Roses*, and the words CESAR BIROTTEAU (LATE RAGON), RETAIL PERFUMER, shall be painted out on the shop-front. I shall simply put up PERFUMERY in big gold letters instead. There will be room on the mezzanine floor for a cash desk and the safe, and a nice little room for you. I shall make the back-shop and the present dining-room and kitchen into a warehouse. Then I mean to take the first floor next door, and make a way into it through the wall. The staircase must be altered so that we can walk on the level out of one house and into the

other. We shall have a fine set of rooms then, furnisl up to the nines.

"Yes. I will have your room done up, and contrive boudoir for you, and Césarine shall have a pretty roo You must engage a young lady for the shop, and she a the assistant and your waiting-maid (yes, madame, y shall have a waiting-maid) shall have rooms on the secon floor. The kitchen must be on the third floor. The coo and the errand-boy shall be lodged up there, and we w keep the stock of bottles, and flasks and china on the fourt The workrooms can be in the attics, so when people con in they will not see bottles being filled and stoppered an labeled, nor sachets being made. That sort of thing is a very well for the Rue Saint-Denis, but it won't do in th Rue Saint-Honoré! Bad style. Our shop ought to be a snug as a drawing-room. Just tell me this: are we the onl perfumers who have come in for honors? Aren't ther vinegar makers and mustard manufacturers who have command in the National Guard, and are well looked on a the Tuileries? Let us do as they do, and extend the busi ness, at the same time making our way in society."

"One moment, Birotteau. Do you know what I think while I hear you talk? Well, to me it is just as if a man was starting out on a wild-goose chase. Don't you remember what I told you when there was talk of your being made mayor? A quiet life before all things, I said: you are about as fit for public life as my arm for a windmill sail. Grand doings will be the ruin of you.

"You did not listen to me: and here the ruin has come upon us. If you are going to take part in politics, you must have money: and have we money? What! you mean to burn the signboard that cost six hundred francs, and give up the *Queen of Roses* and your real glory? Leave ambition to other people. If you put your hand in the fire, you get singed, don't you? Politics are very hot nowadays. We have a hundred thousand francs good money invested outside the business, the stock, and the factory, have we? If

you have a mind to increase it, do now as you did in 1793. The funds are at seventy-two, buy *rentes;* you would have ten thousand livres a year coming in without drawing anything out of the business. Then take advantage of the transfer to marry our Césarine, sell the business, and let us go and live in your part of the world. Why, any time for these fifteen years you have talked of buying the Treasury Farm, that nice little place near Chinon, with streams, and meadows, and woods, and vineyards, and crofts. It would bring you in a thousand crowns a year, and we both of us like the house. It is still to be had for sixty thousand crowns, and my gentleman must meddle and make in politics, must he?

"Just remember what we are—we are perfumers. Sixteen years ago, before you thought of the Superfine Pâte des Sultanes and the Carminative Toilet Lotion, if any one had come and said to you, 'You will have money enough to buy the Treasury Farm,' wouldn't you have been wild with joy? Very well; and now, when you can buy the property which you wanted so much that you talked of nothing else every time that you opened your mouth, you begin to talk of squandering the money that we have earned by the sweat of our brows, *ours* I may say, for all along I have sat there at the desk like a dog in a kennel. Now, instead of turning five halfpence into six farthings, and six farthings into nothing at all, wouldn't it be better to have a daughter married to a notary in Paris, and a house that you can stay at, and to spend eight months in the year at Chinon?

"Wait till the funds rise. You can give your daughter eight thousand livres a year; we will keep two thousand for ourselves, and the sale of the business will pay for the Treasury Farm. We will take the furniture down into the country, dear, it is quite worth while, and there we can live like princes, while here one must have at least a million to cut a figure."

"That is just what I expected," said César Birotteau.

"Oh! you think I am very foolish, no doubt, but I am n so foolish but that I have looked at the thing all round. A tend to what I am going to say. Alexandre Crottat is son-in-law that would suit us to a T, and he will have I guin's practice; but do you imagine that he would be sat fied with a hundred thousand francs? (always supposi that we pay down all our ready money when we marry o daughter; and I am of that way of thinking, for I wou have nothing but dry bread for the rest of my days to s her as happy as a queen and the wife of a Paris notary, you say.) Very well, but a hundred thousand francs dow or even eight thousand francs of *rentes*, would go no w towards buying Roguin's practice.

"Young Xandrot (as we call him) thinks, like ever body else, that we are a great deal richer than we are. that father of his, a rich farmer who sticks to his proper like a leech, does not sell something like a hundred sand francs worth of land, Xandrot will not be a notar for Roguin's practice is worth four or five hundred tho sand francs. If Crottat does not pay half the money dow how will he manage the business? Césarine ought to hav a portion of two hundred thousand francs, and we shou retire like decent citizens of Paris on fifteen thousar livres a year in the funds; that is what I should like. If could make you see all this as clear as daylight, you woul have nothing left to say for yourself, eh?"

"Oh! if you have the wealth of the Indies——"

"So I have, darling. Yes," he put his arm round h wife's waist, and tapped her gently with his fingers, im pelled by the joy that shone from every feature of his fac "I did not want to say a word about this to you till th thing was ripe, but, faith! to-morrow perhaps it will b settled. This it is.

"Roguin has been proposing a business speculation to me so safe that he and one or two of his clients, and Ragon, an your uncle Pillerault, are going into it. We are to bu some building land near the Madeleine. Roguin think

that we can buy it now for a quarter of the price it will fetch in three years' time when the leases will be out, and we shall be free to exploit it. There are six of us; each agrees to take so much: I am finding three hundred thousand francs for the purchase of three-eighths. If any of us are short of money, Roguin will advance it, taking a mortgage on the share of the land as security. Pillerault, old Ragon, and I are going to take half of it among us; but I want to have it registered in my name, so as to keep hold of the handle of the pan and see how the fish are frying. Roguin himself, under the name of M. Charles Claparon, will be joint-owner with me; he will give a guarantee to each of his partners, and I shall do the same with mine. The deeds of purchase will be private deeds until we have all the lands in our hands. Roguin will look into it, and see which of the purchases must be completed, for he is not sure that we can dispense with intermediary registration, and yet transfer a separate title to the buyers when we break up the estate into separate lots; but it would take too long to explain it to you.

"When the building land has been paid for, we shall have nothing to do but fold our arms, and in three years' time we shall have a million. Césarine will be twenty years old, we shall have sold the business, and then, God willing, we will go modestly toward greatness."

"Well, but where are the three hundred thousand francs to come from?" asked Mme. Birotteau.

"My dear little woman, you know nothing of business. There are the hundred thousand francs in Roguin's hands; I will pay them down. Then I shall borrow forty thousand francs on the buildings and the land that our factory stands on, over in the Faubourg du Temple, and we have twenty thousand francs in bills and acceptances in the portfolio—altogether that makes a hundred and sixty thousand francs. There remain a hundred and forty-thousand francs to be raised; I will draw bills to the order of M. Charles Claparon the banker; he will advance the money, less the discount. And there are our three hundred thousand

francs; and you don't owe an account until it is due. W the bills fall due, we shall be ready for them, with the pr of the business. If we should find any difficulty in meet them, Roguin would lend me the money at five per cent o mortgage on my share of the building land. But ther no need to borrow. I have discovered a specific for mak the hair grow, a Comagen oil. Livingston has put u hydraulic press for me down yonder for the hazel-nuts; the oil should be squeezed out at once under such str pressure. In a year's time the probabilities are that I s have made a hundred thousand francs at least. I am think about a placard with *Down with Wigs!* for a heading. would make a prodigious sensation. *You* don't notice h I lie awake. These three months past Macassar Oil has let me sleep. I mean to do for Macassar!"

'So these are the fine plans that have been running your head for a couple of months, and not a word to about them. And I have just seen myself begging at own door: what a warning from Heaven! There will nothing left to us after a while except our eyes to cry w over our troubles. Never shall you do it so long as I alive; do you hear, César? There is some underhand w somewhere that you do not see; you are so straightforwa and honest that you don't suspect others of cheating. W makes them come to offer you millions? You are givi bills; you are going beyond your means; and how if the does not take? Suppose that the money does not come —suppose that you do not sell the building lots, how are y going to meet the bills? With the hazel-nut shells? Y want to rise in the world; you don't intend to have yo name over your own shop-door any longer; you mean take down the sign—the *Queen of Roses*—and yet you a making up rigmaroles of prospectuses and placards, a César Birotteau's name will be posted up at every stre corner, and all over the hoardings, wherever there is buil ing going on."

"Oh, no such thing! I shall open a branch busine

under the name of Popinot. I shall take a shop somewhere near the Rue des Lombards, and put in young Anselme Popinot to look after it. I shall pay a debt of gratitude which we owe to M. and Mme. Ragon by starting their nephew in a business that may make his fortune. The poor Ragons have looked very seedy for some time past, I have thought."

"There! those people are after your money."

"Why, what people, my charmer? Your own uncle, who loves us like his own life, and comes to dine here every Sunday? Then there is that kind old Ragon, our predecessor, who plays boston with us: old Ragon, with a record of forty years of fair dealing. And lastly, do you mean Roguin, a notary of Paris, a man of fifty, who has been in practice for twenty-five years? A notary of Paris would be the best of the bunch if all honest folk were not equally good. My partners will help me out at a pinch. Where is the plot, darling?—Look here, I must give you a piece of my mind. On my word as an honest man, it weighs upon me.—You have always been as suspicious as a cat! As soon as we had two pennyworth of goods in the shop, you began to think that the customers were thieves.—A man has to go down on his knees to beg and pray of you to allow your fortune to be made. For a daughter of Paris, you have scarcely any ambition! If it were not for your eternal fears, there would not be a happier man than I am.—If I had listened to you, I should never have made the Pâte des Sultanes nor the Carminative Toilet Lotion. We have made a living out of the shop, but it was those two discoveries and our soaps that brought in the hundred and sixty thousand francs which we have over and above the business!—But for my genius, for I have talent as a perfumer, we should be petty shopkeepers, hard put to it to make both ends meet, and I should not be one of the notable merchants who elect the judges at the Tribunal of Commerce; I should neither have been a judge nor a deputy-mayor. Do you know what I should have been? A shopkeeper like old Ragon,—no

offence to him, for I respect shops; a shop has been the ma
ing of us. After selling perfumery for forty years,
should have had three thousand livres a year, as he has; a
as prices go now, when things are twice as dear as they us
to be, we too should have had hardly enough to live upo
(Day after day, it goes to my heart more and more to thi
of that old couple. I must come at the truth; I will ha
it out of Popinot to-morrow.)—Yes, if I had taken adv
of you, of you that are afraid of your own luck, and a
always asking if you will have to-morrow what you hold t
day, I should have no credit, nor the Cross of the Legion
Honor, and I should not be looked on as a man who know
what he is about. Oh, you may shake your head; if th
succeeds, I may be deputy for Paris some day. Aha! I w
not named César for nothing; everything has succeeded wi
me.—This is inconceivable! Everybody out of my ow
house admits that I have some capacity; but here at hom
the one person that I want so much to please, and I toil an
moil to make her happy, is just the very one who takes m
for a fool."

There was such a depth of real and constant affection i
these phrases, divided up by eloquent pauses and hurle
forth like cannon balls (as is the wont of those who take
a recriminating attitude), that Mme. Birotteau in her secr
heart felt touched, but, wife-like, she took advantage of th
love she inspired to gain her own ends.

"Very well, Birotteau," said she, "if you love me, let m
be happy in my own way. Neither you nor I have had an
education; we do not know how to talk, nor how to flatte
like worldly-wise people, and how can you expect that w
should succeed in office under Government? I myse
should be quite happy at the Treasury Farm. I have alway
been fond of animals and birds, and I could spend my tim
quite well in looking after the poultry, and living like
farmer's wife. Let us sell the business, marry our Césarin
and let your *Imogen* alone. We will pass the winters in Par
in our son-in-law's house, and we shall be happy; nothing i

politics nor in business could change our ways. Why should you try to eclipse other people? Is not our fortune enough for us? When you are a millionaire, will you be able to eat two dinners a day? Do you want another wife? Look at uncle Pillerault! He is wisely satisfied with what he has, and spends his life in doing good. What does HE want with fine furniture? For I know you have been ordering furniture; I saw Braschon in the shop, and he was not here to buy scent."

"Well, yes, darling, there is some furniture ordered for you. The workmen will begin to-morrow under an architect recommended by M. de la Billardière."

"Good Lord, have mercy upon us!"

"Why, you are unreasonable, pet. Do you think that, fresh and pretty as you are, you can go and bury yourself at thirty-seven at Chinon? I myself, thank the Lord, am only thirty-nine. Chance has opened up a fine career to me, and I am going to enter upon it. If I manage wisely, I can found a house famous among Paris citizens, as people used to do, build up a business, and the Birotteaus shall be like Roguin, Cochin, Guillaume, Le Bas, Nucingen, Saillard, Popinot, and Matifat, all of whom are making, or have made, their mark in their quarter. Come! come! if this speculation were not as safe as gold ingots——"

"Safe!"

"Yes, safe. I have been reckoning it out these two months. Without appearing to do so, I have been making inquiries as to building, at the Hôtel de Ville, and of architects and contractors. M. Grindot, the young architect who is to remodel our place, is in despair because he has no capital to invest in our speculation."

"He knows that there will be houses to build; he is urging you on so as to gobble you up."

"Can people like Pillerault, like Charles Claparon, and Roguin be taken in? The gain is as certain as the profits on the *Pâte*, you see."

"But why should Roguin want to speculate, dear, when

he has bought his practice and made his fortune? I se him go by sometimes; he looks as thoughtful as a minister he has an underhand look that I do not like; he has secre cares. In five years he has come to look like an old rake Whose word have you for it that he will not take to his heel as soon as your money is in his hands? Such things hav been known. Do we know much about him? It is true tha we have been acquainted for fifteen years, but he is not on that I would put my hand into the fire for. I have it! h has ozena; he does not live with his wife; he has mistresse no doubt, and they are ruining him; there is no other reaso for his low spirits that I see. As I dress in the morning I look through the blinds, and I see him going home on foot Where does he come from? Nobody knows. It looks t me as if he had another establishment somewhere in town and he spends one way, and madame another.

"Is that a life for a notary? If they make fifty thou sand francs and get through sixty thousand, there will b an end of the money; in twenty years time they would b as bare as shorn lambs; but if a man is used to shine, he wil plunder his friends without mercy. Charity should prop erly begin at home. The little rascal du Tillet, who used t be with us, is one of his cronies, and I see nothing good i that friendship. If he could not find out du Tillet, he i very blind; and if he knows him, why does he make so muc of him? You will say that there is something between Ro guin's wife and du Tillet. Very well; I look for no goo from a man who has no sense of honor where his wife is con cerned. And in any case, aren't the owners of the building lots very stupid to sell the worth of a hundred francs for hundred sous? If you were to meet a child who did no know what a louis was worth, would you not tell him Your stroke of business looks to me myself very much lik a robbery, no offence to you."

"Dear me! what queer things women are sometimes, an how they mix up their ideas! If Roguin had never med dled in the matter, you would have said, 'Stay, César, sto

a bit; you are acting without consulting Roguin, it will come to no good.' In this present instance he is pledged as it were, and you tell me——"

"No; it is a M. Claparon."

"But a notary's name cannot appear in a speculation."

"Then why should he do something against the law? What do you say to *that*, you who are such a stickler for the law?"

"Just let me go on. Roguin is going into it himself, and you tell me that it will come to no good. Is that sensible? Again you say, 'He is doing something against the law.' But his name will appear in it if necessary. And now you tell me that 'he is rich.' Might not people say as much of me? Ragon and Pillerault might just as well say of me, 'Why are you going into this when you are wallowing in riches?'"

"A tradesman is one thing and a notary another," objected Mme. Birotteau.

"In short, my conscience is quite clear," César went on. "People who sell, sell because they cannot help it; we are no more robbing them than we rob fund-holders when we buy at seventy-five. To-day you buy building lots at to-day's price; in two years time it will be different, just as it is with *rentes*. You may be quite sure, Constance-Barbe-Joséphine Pillerault, that you will never catch César Birotteau doing anything that is against the law, nor against his conscience, nor unscrupulous, or not strictly just and fair. That a man who has been in business eighteen years should be suspected in his own family of cheating!"

"Come, César, be pacified! A wife who has known you all that time knows the depths of your soul. You are the master after all. You made the money, didn't you? It is yours; you can spend it. We might be brought to the lowest depths of poverty, but neither your daughter nor I would ever say a single word of reproach. But listen. When you invented the Pâte des Sultanes and the Carminative Toilet Lotion, what risk did you run? Five or six thousand

francs perhaps. To-day you are risking all you have o
single stake, and you are not the only player in this ga
and some of the others may turn out sharper than you

"You could give this ball and have the rooms redecora
and spend a thousand francs over it—a useless expense,
not ruinous—but as to the Madeleine affair, I am agains
once and for all. You are a perfumer; be a perfumer,
not a speculator in building land. We women have an
stinct that does not lead us astray. I have warned y
now act on your own ideas. You have been a judge at
Tribunal of Commerce, you know the law, you have stee
your boat wisely, and I will follow you, César! But I sh
have misgivings until I see our fortune on a sound basis
Césarine well married. God send that my dream was
prophetic!"

This meekness was annoying to Birotteau. He had
course to a simple stratagem, which he found useful on su
occasions.

"Listen, Constance; I have not really given my wo
though it is as good as if I had."

"Oh! César, there is nothing more to be said, so let
say no more about it. Honor before riches. Come, get in
bed, dear; there is no firewood left. Besides, it is eas
to talk in bed if it amuses you.—Oh! the sad dream I ha
Good Lord, to see *yourself!* Why, it was fearful! . .
Césarine and I will make a pretty number of *neuvaines* f
the success of the land."

"Of course, the help of God would do us no harm," B
rotteau said gravely, "but the essence of hazel-nuts is
power likewise, wife. I discovered this, like the Pâte d
Sultanes, by accident; the first time it was by opening
book, but it was an engraving of *Hero and Leander* th
suggested this new idea to me. A woman, you know, pou
ing oil on her lover's head: isn't it nice? The most certa
speculations are those that are based on vanity, self-love,
a regard for appearances. Those sentiments will never
extinct."

"Alas, I see that clearly."

"At a certain age," pursued Birotteau, "men will do anything to grow hair on their heads when they have none. Hairdressers have told me for some time past that they are selling hair-dyes and all sorts of drugs that are said to promote the growth of the hair as well as Macassar Oil. Since the peace, men live more among women, and women do not like bald heads, eh! eh! *mimi!* So the demand for that class of article can be explained by the political situation.

"A composition which would keep your hair in good condition would sell like bread, and all the more so because the essence will doubtless be approved by the Académie des Sciences. Perhaps kind M. Vauquelin will do me another good turn. I shall go to submit my notion to him to-morrow, and ask him to accept that engraving which I have found at last after inquiring for it for two years in Germany. M. Vauquelin is engaged in analyzing hair, precisely the subject, so Chiffreville (who is associated with him in the production of chemicals) tells me. If my discovery concurs with his, my essence will be bought by both sexes. There is a fortune in my idea, I repeat. Good Heavens! I cannot sleep for it. Eh! luckily, little Popinot has the finest head of hair in the world. With a young lady in the shop whose hair should reach to the ground, and who should say (if the thing is possible without sinning against God or your neighbor) that the Comagen Oil (for it is decidedly an oil) counts for something in bringing that about; all the grizzled heads will be down upon it like poverty upon the world. And I say, dearie, how about your ball? I am not spiteful, but I really should like to have that little rogue of a du Tillet, who swaggers about and never sees me on 'Change. He knows that I know something that is not pretty about him. Perhaps I let him off too easily. How funny it is, wife, that one should always be punished for good actions: here below, of course! I have been like a father to him; you do not know all that I have done for him."

"Simply to hear you talk of him makes my flesh creep.

If you had known what he intended to do to you, you would not have kept the theft of three thousand francs so quiet (I have guessed how the thing was arranged). If you had put him in the police court, perhaps you might have done a good many people a service."

"What did he mean to do to me?"

"Nothing. Birotteau, if you were inclined to listen to me to-night, I would give you a bit of sound advice, and that is to let du Tillet alone."

"Would not people think it very strange if I were to forbid an old assistant my house after I had been his surety for twenty thousand francs when he first started in business for himself. There, let us do good for its own sake. And perhaps du Tillet has mended his ways."

"Everything must be put topsy-turvy here!"

"What is this about topsy-turvy? Why, it will all be ruled like a sheet of music. So you have forgotten already what I have just told you about the staircase, and how I have arranged with Cayron, the umbrella merchant next door, to take part of his house! He and I must go together in the morning to see his landlord, M. Molineux. I have as much business on hand to-morrow as a Minister."

"You have made me dizzy with your plans," said Constance; "I am muddled with them; and besides, Birotteau, I am sleepy."

"Good-morning," returned her husband. "Just listen—I say good-morning, because it is morning now, *mimi!* Ah, she has dropped off to sleep, dear child! There! you shall be the richest of the rich, or my name will not be César any longer," and a few minutes later Constance and César were peacefully snoring.

A rapid glance over the previous history of this household will confirm the impression which should have been conveyed by the friendly dispute between the two principal personages in this *Scène*, in which the lives of a retail shopkeeper and his wife are depicted. This sketch will explain,

moreover, the strange chances by which César Birotteau became a perfumer, a deputy-mayor, an ex-officer of the National Guard, and a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. By laying bare the depths of his character and the springs of his greatness, it will be possible to comprehend how it is that the vicissitudes of commerce, which strong heads turn to their advantage, become irreparable catastrophes for weaker spirits. Events are only episodic; their consequences depend entirely upon the individual. The misfortune which is a stepping-stone for genius, becomes a piscina for the Christian, a treasure for a quick-witted man, and for weaklings an abyss.

A cotter, Jacques Birotteau by name, living near Chinon, took unto himself a wife, a domestic servant in the house of a lady, who employed him in her vineyard. Three sons were born to them; his wife died at the birth of the third, and the poor fellow did not long survive her. Then the mistress, out of affection for her maid, adopted the oldest of the cotter's boys; she brought him up with her own son, and placed him in a seminary. This François Birotteau took orders, and during the Revolution led the wandering life of priests who would not take the oath, hiding from those who hunted them down like wild beasts, lucky to meet with no worse fate than the guillotine. At the time when this story begins he was a priest of the cathedral at Tours, and had but once left that city to see his brother César. On that occasion the traffic in the streets of Paris so bewildered the good man that he dared not leave his room; he called the cabs "half-coaches," and was astonished at everything. He stayed one week, and then went back to Tours, promising himself that he would never revisit the capital.

The vinedresser's second son, Jean Birotteau, was drawn by the army, and during the early wars of the Revolution promptly became a captain. At the battle of the Trebbia, Macdonald called for volunteers to storm a battery, and Captain Jean Birotteau charged with his company and fell.

It appeared to be the destiny of the Birotteaus that other men should supplant them, or that events should be too strong for them whenever they [illegible].

The youngest son is the chief actor in this *Scène*. When César was fourteen years old, and could read, write, and cipher, he left the district, and with one louis in his pocket set out on foot for Paris to make his fortune. On the recommendation of an apothecary in Tours, M. and Mme. Ragon, retail perfumers, took him as errand boy. César at that time was possessed of a pair of hobnailed shoes, a pair of breeches, blue stockings, a sprigged waistcoat, a countryman's jacket, three ample shirts of good linen, and a stout walking-stick. His hair might be clipped like a chorister's, but he was a solidly-built Tourangeau; and any tendency to the laziness rampant in his district was counteracted in him by a strong desire to make his way in the world. Perhaps he was lacking somewhat in brains as in education, but he had inherited upright instincts and scrupulous integrity from his mother, who had "a heart of gold," as they say in Touraine.

César was paid six francs a month by way of wages. He boarded in the house, and slept on a truckle-bed in the attics next to the servant's room. The shopmen showed him how to fetch and carry and tie up parcels, to sweep out the shop and the pavement before it, and made a butt of him, breaking him in to business after the manner of their kind, and contriving to blend a good deal of amusement (for themselves) with his instruction. M. and Mme. Ragon spoke to him as if he were a dog. Nobody cared how tired the apprentice might be, and he was often very tired and footsore of a night after tramping over the pavements, and his shoulders often ached. The principle "each for himself," that gospel of great cities, put in application, made César's life in Paris a very hard one. He used to cry sometimes when the day was over, and he thought of Touraine, where the peasant works leisurely, and the mason takes his time about laying a stone, and toil is judiciously tempered by

idleness; but he usually fell asleep before he reached the point of thinking of running away, for his morning's round of work awaited him, and he did his duty with the instinctive obedience of a yard dog. If he happened to complain, the first shopman would smile jocosely. "Ah, my boy," said he, "life is not all roses at the *Queen of Roses*, and larks don't drop ready roasted into your mouth; first catch your lark, and then you want the other things before you cook it."

The cook, a stout Picarde, kept the best morsels for herself, and never spoke to César but to complain of M. and Mme. Ragon, who left her nothing to purloin. On one Sunday at the end of every month she was obliged to stop in the house, and then she broke ground with César. Ursule, scoured for Sunday, was a charming creature in the eyes of the poor errand boy, who, but for a chance, was about to make shipwreck on the first sunken reef in his career. Like all human beings who have no one to care for them, he fell in love with the first woman who gave him a kind glance. The cook took César under her wing, and secret love passages followed, at which the assistants jeered unmercifully. Luckily, two years later, the cook threw over César for a young runaway from the army, a fellow-countryman of hers who was hiding in Paris; and the Picard, a land-owner to the extent of several acres, allowed himself to be drawn into a marriage with Ursule.

But during those two years the cook fed her lad César well, and explained to him the seamy side of not a few of the mysteries of Paris. Motives of jealousy led her to instil into him a perfect horror of low haunts, whose perils seemingly were not unknown to her. In 1792 César, the basely deserted, had grown accustomed to his life; his feet were used to the pavements, his shoulders accommodated to packing-cases, his wits to what he called the *humbug* of Paris. So when Ursule threw him over, he promptly took comfort, for he had not realized any of his intuitive ideas as to sentiments. Lascivious, bad-tempered, fawning, and rapacious, a selfish woman, given to drink, she had jarred on Birot-

teau's unsophisticated nature, and had opened out no future to him. At times the poor boy saw with di that he was bound by the strongest of ties for a simple heart to a creature with whom he had no sympathy. By the time that he was set free he had developed, and had reached the age of sixteen. His wits had been sharpened by Ursule and by the shopmen's jokes; he set himself to learn the business. Intelligence was hidden beneath his simplicity. He watched the customers with shrewd eyes. In his spare moments he asked for explanations concerning the goods; he remembered where everything was kept; one fine day he knew the goods, prices, and quantities in stock better than the newer comers, and thenceforward M. and Mme. Ragon looked on him as a settled institution.

When the Requisition of the terrible year II. made a clean sweep of Citizen Ragon's house, César Birotteau, promoted to be second assistant, improved his position, received a salary of fifty livres per month, and seated himself at the Ragons' table with joy unspeakable. The second assistant at the sign of the *Queen of Roses* had by this time saved six hundred francs, and he now had a room filled with furniture such as he had for a long time coveted, in which he could keep the belongings which he had accumulated under lock and key. On Décadis, dressed after the fashion of an epoch which affected rough and homely ways, the quiet, humble peasant lad looked at least the equal of other young citizens, and in this way he overleapt the social barriers which in domestic life would, in different times, have been raised between the peasant and the trading classes. Towards the end of that year his honesty won for him the control of the till. The awe-inspiring Citoyenne Ragon saw to his linen, and husband and wife treated him like one of the family.

In Vendémiaire 1794 César Birotteau, being possessed of one hundred gold louis, exchanged them for six thousand francs in assignats, bought *rentes* therewith at thirty francs, paid for them when depreciated prices ruled on the Ex-

change, and hoarded his stock-receipt with unspeakable delight. From that day forward he followed the rise and fall of the funds and the course of events with a secret anxiety that made his heart beat fast at the tidings of every victory or defeat which marked the history of that period.

At this critical period M. Ragon, sometime purveyor of perfumes to Her Majesty Queen Marie-Antoinette, confided to César Birotteau his attachment to the fallen tyrants. This confidence was an event of capital importance in César's life. The Tourangeau was transformed into a fanatical adherent of Royalty in the course of evening conversations after the shutters were put up, the books posted, and the streets quiet without. César was simply obeying his natural instincts. His imagination kindled at the tale of the virtuous deeds of Louis XVI., followed by anecdotes told by husband and wife of the good qualities of the Queen whom they extolled. His tender heart was revolted by the horrible fate of the two crowned heads, struck off but a few paces from the shop door, and he conceived a hatred for a system of government which poured forth innocent blood that cost nothing to shed.

Commercial instincts made him quick to see the death of trade in the law of maximum prices, and in political storms, which always bode ill to business. In his quality of perfumer, moreover, he loathed a Revolution that forbade powder, and was responsible for the fashion of wearing the hair *à la Titus*. The tranquillity secured to the nation by an absolute monarchy seemed to be the one possible condition in which life and property would be safe, so he waxed zealous for a monarchy.

M. Ragon, finding so apt a disciple, made him his assistant in the shop, and initiated him into the secrets of the *Queen of Roses*. Some of the customers were the most active and devoted of the secret agents of the Bourbons, and kept up a correspondence between Paris and the West. Carried away by youthful enthusiasm, electrified by contact with such men as Georges, La Biliardière, Montauran, Bau-

van, Longuy, Manda, Bernier, du Guénic, and Fontaine, César flung himself into the conspiracy of the 13th Vendémiaire, when Royalists and Terrorists combined against the dying Convention.

César had the honor of warring against Napoleon on the steps of the Church of Saint-Roch, and was wounded at the beginning of the action. Every one knows the result of this attempt. The obscurity from which Barras' aide-de-camp then emerged was Birotteau's salvation. A few friends carried the bellicose counter-hand home to the *Queen of Roses*, where he lay in hiding in the garret, nursed by Mme. Ragon, and lucky to be forgotten. César's military courage had been nothing but a flash. During his month of convalescence he came to some sound conclusions as to the ludicrous alliance of politics and perfumery. If a Royalist he remained, he made up his mind that he would be simply and solely a Royalist perfumer, that he would never compromise himself again, and he threw himself body and soul into his calling.

After the 18th Brumaire, M. and Mme. Ragon, despairing of the Royalist cause, determined to retire from the perfumery trade, to live like respectable private citizens, and to cease to meddle in politics. If they were to receive the full value of their business, it behoved them to find a man who had more honesty than ambition, and more homely sense than brilliancy, so Ragon broached the matter to his first assistant. Birotteau hesitated. He was twenty years old, with a thousand francs a year invested in the public funds; it was his ambition to go to live near Chinon as soon as he should have fifteen hundred francs a year, and the First Consul, after consolidating his position at the Tuileries, should have consolidated the national debt. He asked himself why he should risk his little honestly-earned independence in business. He had never expected to make so much wealth; it was entirely owing to chances which are only embraced in youth; and now he was thinking of taking a wife in Touraine, a woman who should have an equal fortune, so that he might buy and cul-

tivate a little property called the Treasury Farm, a bit of land which he had set longing eyes since he had come to man's estate. He dreamed of adding more land to the Treasury Farm, of making a thousand crowns a year, of leading a happy and obscure life there. He was on the point of refusing the farmer's offer, when love suddenly altered his resolutions and multiplied the total of his ambitions by ten.

Since Ursule's base desertion, César had led a steady life; this was partly a consequence of hard work, partly a dread of the risks run in pursuit of pleasure in Paris. Desire that remains unsatisfied becomes a craving, and marriage for the lower middle classes becomes a fixed idea, for it is the one way open to them of winning and appropriating a woman. César Birotteau was in this case. The first assistant was the responsible person at the *Queen of Roses;* he had not a moment to spare for amusement. In such a life the craving is still more imperatively felt; so it happened that the apparition of a handsome girl, to whom a dissipated young fellow would scarcely have given a thought, was bound to make the greatest impression upon the steady César.

One fine June day, as he was about to cross the Pont Marie to the Ile Saint-Louis, he saw a girl standing in the doorway of a corner shop on the Quai d'Anjou. Constance Pillerault was a forewoman in a linen-drapery establishment, at the sign of the *Little Sailor,* a pioneer instance of a kind of shop which has since spread all over Paris, with painted signboards more or less in evidence, flying flags, much display. Shawls are suspended in the windows, and piles of cravats erected like fortified castles, together with countless devices to attract custom, ribbon streamers, showcards, notices of fixed prices; optical illusions and effects carried to the pitch of perfection which has made of shop windows the fairyland of commerce.

The low prices asked at the sign of the *Little Sailor* for the goods described as "novelties" had brought this shop, in one of the quietest and least fashionable quarters of Paris, an unheard-of influx of custom.

The aforesaid young lady behind the counter was as cele-

brated for her beauty as La belle Limonadière of the Café des Milles Colonnes at a later day, and not a few others whose unfortunate lot it has been to attract faces young and old, more numerous than the paving stones of Paris, to the windows of milliners' shops and cafés. The first assistant from the *Queen of Roses*, whose life was spent between Saint-Roch and the Rue de la Sourdière, in the daily routine of the perfumery business, did not so much as suspect the existence of the *Little Sailor*, for retailers in Paris know very little of each other.

César was so violently smitten with the beautiful Constance that he hurried tempestuously into the *Little Sailor* to bargain for half-a-dozen linen shirts. Long did he haggle over the price, bale after bale of linen was displayed for his inspection; he behaved exactly like an Englishwoman in a humor for shopping. The young lady condescended to interest herself in César's purchase; perceiving, by certain signs which women understand, that he had come to the shop more for the sake of the saleswoman than for her goods. He gave his name and address to the young lady, who became quite indifferent to the customer's admiration as soon as he had made his purchase. The poor assistant had done but little to gain Ursule's good graces; if he had been sheepish then, love now made him more sheepish still; he did not dare to say a syllable, and was, moreover, too much dazzled to note the indifference which succeeded to the smiles of this siren of commerce.

Every evening for a week he took up his post before the *Little Sailor*, hanging about for a glance as a dog waits for a bone at a kitchen door; regardless of the jibes in which the shopmen and saleswomen indulged at his expense; making way meekly for customers or passers-by, watchful of every little change that took place in the shop. A few days later, he again entered the paradise where his angel dwelt, not so much to purchase pocket-handkerchiefs of her as with a view of communicating a luminous idea to the angel's mind.

"If you should require any perfumery, mademoiselle," he

remarked, as he paid the bill, "I could supply you in the same way."

Constance Pillerault daily received brilliant proposals, in which there was never any mention of marriage; and though her heart was as pure as her white forehead, it was not until the indefatigable César had proved his love by six months of strategical operations, that she deigned to receive his attentions. Even then she would not commit herself. Prudence had been demanded of her by the multitudinous number of her admirers—wholesale wine merchants, well-to-do bar-keepers, and others, who made eyes at her. The lover found a supporter in her guardian, M. Claude-Joseph Pillerault, an ironmonger on the Quai de la Ferraille, a discovery made by the secret espionage which is pre-eminently a lover's shift.

In this rapid sketch, it is impossible to describe the delights of this harmless Parisian love-intrigue; the little extravagances characteristic of the shopman—the first melons of the season, the little dinners at Vénua's, followed by the theatre, the drives into the country in a cab on Sunday—must be passed over in silence. César was not a positively handsome young fellow, but there was nothing in his appearance to repel love. Life in Paris and days spent in a dark shop had toned down the high color natural to the peasant lad. His thick black hair, his Norman breadth of shoulder, his sturdy limbs, his simple straightforward look, all contributed to prepossess people in his favor. Uncle Pillerault, the responsible guardian of his brother's child, made various inquiries about the Tourangeau, and gave his consent; and in the fair month of May 1800, Mlle. Pillerault promised to marry César Birotteau. He nearly fainted with joy when Constance-Barbe-Joséphine accepted him as her husband under a lime-tree at Sceaux.

"You will have a good husband, my little girl," said M. Pillerault. "He has a warm heart and sentiments of honor. He is as straight as a line, and as good as the Child Jesus; he is a king of men, in short."

Constance put away once and for all the dreams of a brill-

iant future, which, like most shop girls, she had sometimes indulged. She [illegible] a good mother, and [illegible] with the religious programme of the middle classes. [illegible] suited her ideas much better than the dangerous vanities tempting to a youthful Parisian imagination. Constance's intelligence was a narrow one; she was the typical small tradesman's wife, who always grumbles a little over her work, who refuses a thing at the outset, and is vexed when she is taken at her word; whose restless activity takes all things, from cash-box to kitchen, as its province, and supervises everything, from the weightiest business transactions down to almost invisible darns in the household linen. Such a woman scolds while she loves, and can only conceive ideas of the very simplest, only the small change, as it were, of thought passes current with her; she argues about everything, lives in chronic fear of the unknown, makes constant forecasts, and is always thinking of the future. Her statuesque yet girlish beauty, her engaging looks, her freshness, prevented Cesar from thinking of her shortcomings; and, moreover, she made up for them by a woman's sensitive conscientiousness, an excessive thrift, by her fanatical love of work, and genius as a saleswoman.

Constance was just eighteen years old, and the possessor of eleven thousand francs. Cesar, in whom love had developed the most unbounded ambition, bought the perfumery business, and transplanted the *Queen of Roses* to a handsome shop near the Place Vendôme. He was only twenty-one years of age, married to a beautiful and adored wife, and almost the owner of his establishment, for he had paid three-fourths of the amount. He saw (how should he have seen otherwise?) the future in fair colors, which seemed fairer still as he measured his career from its starting-point.

Roguin (Ragon's notary) drew up the marriage-contract, and gave sage counsels to the young perfumer; he it was who interfered when the latter was about to complete the purchase

of the business with his wife's money. "Just keep the money you, my boy; ready money is sometimes a handy thing in business," he had said.

Birotteau gazed at the notary in admiration, fell into the habit of consulting him, and made a friend of Roguin. Like Chardon and Pillerault, he had so much faith in notaries as a class, that he placed himself in Roguin's hands without admitting a doubt of him. Thanks to this advice, César started business with the eleven thousand francs brought him by Constance; and would not have "changed places" with the First Consul, however brilliant Napoleon's lot might seem to be.

At first the Birotteau establishment had but one servant-maid. They lodged on the mezzanine floor above the shop. In this sort of den, passably furnished by an upholsterer, the newly-wedded pair entered upon a perennial honeymoon. Mme. César at her cash desk was a marvel to see. Her famous beauty exercised an enormous influence on the sales; the dandies of the Empire talked of nothing but the lovely Mme. Birotteau. If César's political principles were tainted with Royalism, it was acknowledged that his business principles were above suspicion; and if some of his fellow-tradesmen envied him his luck, he was believed to deserve it. That shot on the steps of the Church of Saint-Roch had gained him a certain reputation—he was looked upon as a brave man, and a man deep in political secrets; though he had nothing of a soldier's courage in his composition, and not even a rudimentary political notion in his head.

On these data the good folk of the Arrondissement made him a Captain of the National Guard, but he was cashiered by Napoleon (according to Birotteau, that matter of Vendémaire still rankled in the First Consul's mind), and thenceforward César was invested with a certain halo of martyrdom, cheaply acquired, which made him interesting to opponents, and gave him a certain importance.

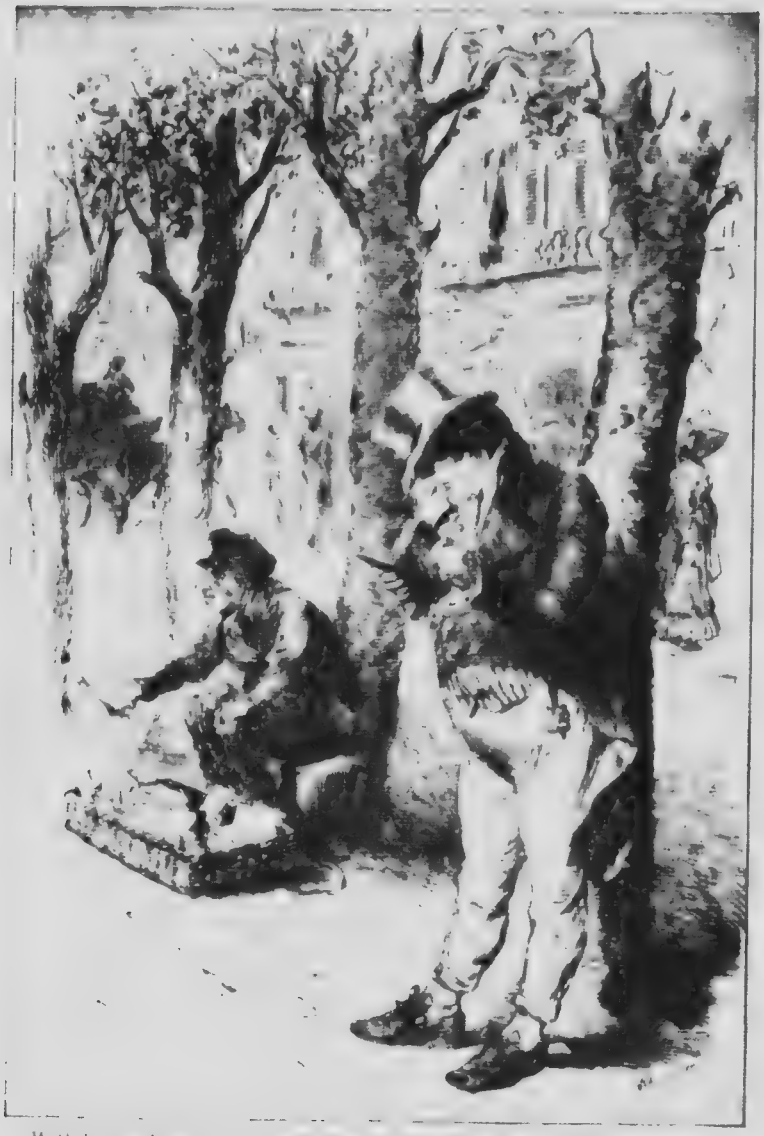
Here, in brief, is the history of this household, so happy in itself, and disturbed by none but business cares.

During the first year, César instructed his wife in all the ins and outs of the perfumery business, which she was admirably quick to grasp; she might have been brought into the world for that sole purpose, so well did she adapt herself to her customers. The result of the stocktaking at the end of the year alarmed the ambitious perfumer. After deducting all expenses, he might perhaps hope, in twenty years' time, to make the modest sum of a hundred thousand francs, the price of his felicity. He determined then and there to find some speedier road to fortune, and, by way of a beginning, to be a manufacturer as well as a retailer.

Acting against his wife's counsel, he took the lease of a shed on some building land in the Faubourg du Temple, and painted up thereon, in huge letters, CÉSAR BIROTTEAU'S FACTORY. He enticed a workman from Grasse, and with him began to manufacture several kinds of soap, essences, and eau-de-cologne, on the system of half profits. The partnership only lasted six months, and ended in a loss, which he had to sustain alone; but Birotteau did not lose heart. He meant to obtain a result at any price, if it were only to escape a scolding from his wife; and, indeed, he confessed to her afterwards that, in those days of despair, his head used to boil like a pot on the fire, and that many a time, but for religious principles, he would have thrown himself into the Seine.

One day, depressed by several unsuccessful experiments, he was sauntering home to dinner along the boulevards (the lounger in Paris is a man in despair quite as often as a genuine idler), when a book among a hamperful at six sous apiece caught his attention; his eyes were attracted by the yellow dusty title-page, *Abdeker*, so it ran, *or the Art of Preserving Beauty*.

Birotteau took up the work. It claimed to be a translation from the Arabic, but in reality it was a sort of romance written by a physician in the previous century. César happened to stumble upon a passage therein which treated of perfumes, and with his back against a tree in the boulevard, he turned the pages over till he reached a footnote, wherein



With his back against a tree in the Boulevard, he turned the pages [illegible]

the learned author discoursed of the nature of the dermis and epidermis. The writer showed conclusively that such and such an unguent or soap often produced an effect exactly opposite to that intended, and the ointment, or the soap, acted as a tonic upon a skin that required a lenitive treatment, or *vice versâ*.

Birotteau saw a fortune in the book, and bought it. Yet, feeling little confidence in his unaided lights, he went to Vauquelin, the celebrated chemist, and in all simplicity asked him how to compose a double cosmetic which should produce the required effect upon the human epidermis in either case. The really learned—men so truly great in this sense that they can never receive in their lifetime all the fame that should reward vast labors like theirs—are almost always helpful and kindly to the poor in intellect. So it was with Vauquelin. He came to the assistance of the perfumer, gave him a formula for a paste to whiten the hands, and allowed him to style himself its inventor. It was this cosmetic that Birotteau called the Superfine Pâte des Sultanes. The more thoroughly to accomplish his purpose, he used the recipe for the paste for a wash for the complexion, which he called the Carminative Toilet Lotion.

He took a hint from the *Little Sailor,* and was the first among perfumers to make the lavish use of placards, handbills, and divers kinds of advertisement, which, perhaps not undeservedly, are called quackery. The Pâte des Sultanes and the Carminative Toilet Lotion were introduced to the polite world and to commerce by gorgeous placards, with the words *Approved by the Institute* at the head. The effect of this formula, employed thus for the first time, was magical. Not France only, but the face of Europe was covered with flaming proclamations, yellow, scarlet, and blue, which informed the world that the sovereign lord of the *Queen of Roses* manufactured, kept in stock, and supplied everything in his line of business at moderate charges.

At a time when the East was the one topic of conversation, in a country where every man has a natural turn for the part

of a sultan, and every woman is no less minded to become a sultana, the idea of giving to any cosmetic such a name as the Pâte des Sultanes might have occurred to any ordinary man, it needed no cleverness to foresee its fascination; but the public always judges by results, and Birotteau's reputation for business ability but grew the more when he indited a prospectus, and the very absurdity of its language contributed to its success. In France we only laugh at men and things who are talked about, and those who fail to make any mark are not talked about. So although Birotteau's stupidity was real and not feigned, people gave him credit for playing the fool on purpose.

A copy of the prospectus has been procured, not without difficulty, by the house of Popinot & Co., druggists in the Rue des Lombards. In a more elevated connection this curious piece of rhetoric would be styled an historical document, and valued for the light that it sheds on contemporary manners. Here, therefore, it is given:—

CÉSAR BIROTTEAU'S

SUPERFINE PÂTE DES SULTANES

AND

CARMINATIVE TOILET LOTION.

A MARVELOUS DISCOVERY!

Approved by the Institute.

"For some time past a preparation for the hands, and a toilet lotion more efficacious than Eau-de-Cologne, have been generally desired by both sexes throughout Europe. After devoting long nights to the study of the dermis and epidermis of both sexes—for both attach, and with reason, the greatest importance to the softness, suppleness, bloom, and delicate surface of the skin—M. Birotteau, a perfumer of high standing, and well known in the capital and abroad, has invented two preparations, which from their first appearance have been deservedly called 'marvelous' by people of

the highest fashion in Paris. Both preparations possess astonishing properties, and act upon the skin without bringing about premature wrinkles, the inevitable result of the rash use of the drugs hitherto compounded by ignorance and cupidity.

"These inventions are based upon the difference of temperaments, which are divided into two great classes, are indicated by the difference of color in the pâte and the lotion; the rose-colored preparations being intended for the dermis and epidermis of persons of lymphatic constitution, and the white for those endowed with a sanguine temperament.

"The pâte is called the 'Pâte des Sultanes,' because the specific was in the first instance invented for the Seraglio by an Arab physician. It has been approved by the Institute on the report of our illustrious chemist Vauquelin, and the lotion, likewise approved, is compounded upon the same principles.

"The Pâte des Sultanes, an invaluable preparation, which exhales the sweetest fragrance, dissipates the most obstinate freckles, whitens the skin in the most stubborn cases, and represses the perspiration of the hand from which women suffer no less than men.

"The 'Carminative Toilet Lotion' removes the slight pimples which sometimes appear inopportunely on ladies' faces, and contravene their projects for the ball; it refreshe and revives the color by opening or closing the pores of the skin in accordance with the exigencies of the temperament, while its efficacy in arresting the ravages of time is so well known already that many ladies, out of gratitude, call it the 'Friend of Beauty.'

"Eau-de-Cologne is purely and simply an ordinary perfume without special efficacy, while the Superfine Pâte des Sultanes and the Carminative Toilet Lotion are two active remedies, powerful agents, perfectly harmless in their operation of seconding the efforts of nature; their perfumes, essentially balsamic and exhilarating, admirably refresh the animal spirits, and charm and revive ideas. Their merits are as marvelous as their simplicity; in short, to woman they offer an added charm, while a means of attraction is put within the reach of man.

"The daily use of the Carminative Toilet Lotion allays the smarting sensation caused by shaving, while it keeps the lips red and smooth, and prevents chapping; it gradually dissipates freckles by natural means; and finally, it restores tone to the complexion. These results are the signs of that perfect equilibrium of the

humors of the body, which ensures immunity from the migraine to those who are subject to that distressing complaint. In short, the Carminative Toilet Lotion, which may be used in all the operations of the toilet, is a preventive of cutaneous affections, by permitting free transpiration through the tissues, while imparting a permanent bloom to the skin.

"All communications should be prepaid, and addressed to M. César Birotteau (late Ragon), Perfumer to her late Majesty, Queen Marie-Antoinette, at the 'Queen of Roses,' Rue Saint-Honoré, near the Place Vendôme, Paris.

"The price of the Pâte is three livres per tablet, and of the Toilet Lotion, six livres per bottle.

"To prevent fradulent imitations, M. Birotteau warns the public that the wrapper of every tablet bears his signature, and that his name is stamped on every bottle of the Toilet Lotion."

The success of this scheme was due, as a matter of fact (though César did not suspect it), to Constance, who proposed that they should send sample cases of the Carminative Toilet Lotion and the Superfine Pâte des Sultanes to every perfumer in France or abroad, offering, at the same time, a discount of thirty per cent as an inducement to take a gross of either article at a time.

The Pâte and the Lotion were really better than similar cosmetics, and the simple were attracted by that distinction made between the two temperaments. The discount was tempting to hundreds of perfumers all over France, and each would take annually three hundred gross or more of both preparations; and if the profits on each article were small, the demand was great, and the output enormous. César was able to buy the sheds and the plot of land in the Faubourg du Temple. He built a large factory there, and had the *Queen of Roses* magnificently decorated. The household began to feel the small comforts of an easier existence, and the wife quaked less than heretofore.

In 1810 Mme. César predicted a rise in house rents. At her instance her husband took the lease of the whole house above the shop, and they removed from the mezzanine floor

(where they had begun housekeeping together) to the first floor. A piece of luck which befell them about this time decided Constance to shut her eyes to Birotteau's follies in the matter of decorating a room for her. The perfumer was made a judge of the Tribunal of Commerce. It was his character for integrity and conscientiousness, together with the esteem in which he was held, that gained this dignity for him; thenceforward he must be considered as a notable among the tradesmen of Paris.

He used to rise at five o'clock in the morning to read handbooks on jurisprudence and works which treated of commercial law. With his instinct for fair dealing, his uprightness, his readiness to take trouble—all qualities essential for the appreciation of the knotty points submitted to arbitration—he was one of the most highly esteemed judges in the Tribunal. His faults contributed no less to his reputation. César was so conscious of his inferiority that he was ready and willing to take his colleagues' opinion, and they were flattered by the attention with which he listened to them. Some of them thought a good deal of the silent approbation of such a listener, reputed to be a hard-headed man; others were delighted with his amiability and modesty, and extolled him on those grounds. Those amenable to his jurisdiction lauded his benevolence and conciliatory spirit, and he was often called in to act as arbitrator in disputes wherein his homely sense suggested to him a kind of Cadi's justice.

He managed to invent and use throughout his term of office a style of his own; it was stuffed with platitudes, interspersed with trite sayings, and pieces of reasoning rounded into phrases which came out without effort, and sounded like eloquence in the ears of shallow people. In this way he commended himself to the naturally mediocre majority, condemned to penal servitude for life and to views of the earth earthy.

César lost so much time at the Tribunal that his wife put pressure upon him, and thenceforward he declined the costly honor.

In the year 1813 this household, thanks to its constant unity, after plodding along through life in a humdrum fashion, entered upon an era of prosperity which nothing seemingly ought to check.

M. and Mme. Ragon (their predecessors), Uncle Pillerault, Roguin the notary, the Matifats (druggists in the Rue des Lombards who supplied the *Queen of Roses*), Joseph Lebas (a retail draper, a leading light in the Rue Saint-Denis, successor to Guillaume at the *Cat and Racket*), Judge Popinot (Mme. Ragon's brother), Chiffreville (of the firm of Protez & Chiffreville), M. Cochin (a clerk of the Treasury, and a sleeping partner in Matifat's business), his wife, Mme. Cochin, and the Abbé Loraux (confessor and director of the devout among this little circle) made up, with one or two others, the number of their acquaintance. César Birotteau might be a Royalist, but public opinion at that time was in his favor; and though he had scarcely a hundred thousand francs beside his business, was looked upon as a very wealthy man. His steady-going ways, his punctuality, his habit of paying ready money for everything, of never discounting bills, while he would take paper to oblige a customer of whom he was sure,—all these things, together with his readiness to oblige, had brought him a great reputation. And not only so; he had really made a good deal of money, but the building of his factories had absorbed most of it, and he paid nearly twenty thousand francs a year in rent. The education of their only daughter, whom Constance and César both idolized, had been a heavy expense. Neither the husband nor the wife thought of money where Césarine's pleasure was concerned, and they had never brought themselves to part with her.

Imagine the delight of the poor peasant-parvenu when he heard his charming Césarine play a sonata by Steibelt or sing a ballad; when he saw her writing French correctly, or making sepia drawings of landscape, or listened while she read aloud from the Racines, father and son, and explained the beauties of the poetry. What happiness it was for him to live again in this fair, innocent flower, not yet plucked from the parent

stem; this angel, over whose growing graces and earliest development they had watched with such passionate tenderness; this only child, incapable of despising her father or of laughing at his want of education, so much was she his little daughter.

When César came to Paris, he had known how to read, write, and cipher, and at that point his education had been arrested. There had been no opportunity in his hard-working life of acquiring new ideas and information beyond the perfumery trade. He had spent his time among folk to whom science and literature were matters of indifference, and whose knowledge was of a limited and special kind; he himself, having no time to spare for loftier studies, became perforce a practical man. He adopted (how should he have done otherwise?) the langaage, errors, and opinions of the Parisian tradesman who admires Molière, Voltaire, and Rousseau on hearsay, and buys their works, but never opens them; who will have it that the proper way to pronounce *armoire* is *ormoire*: *or* means gold, and *moire* means silk, and women's dresses used almost always to be made of silk, and in their cupboards they locked up silk and gold—therefore, *ormoire* is right and *armoire* is an innovation. Potier, Talma, Mlle. Mars, and other actors and actresses were millionaires ten times over, and did not live like ordinary mortals; the great tragedian lived on raw meat, and Mlle. Mars would have a fricassee of pearls now and then—an idea she had taken from some celebrated Egyptian actress. As to the Emperor, his waistcoat pockets were lined with leather, so that he could take a handful of snuff at a time; he used to ride at full gallop up the staircase of the orangery at Versailles. Authors and artists ended in the workhouse, the natural close to their eccentric careers; they were, every one of them, atheists into the bargain, so that you had to be very careful not to admit anybody of that sort into your house. Joseph Lebas used to avert with horror to the story of his sister-in-law Augustine who married the artist Sommervieux. Astronomers lived on raders. These bright examples of the attitude of the bour-

geois mind towards philology, the drama, politics, and science will throw light upon its breadth of view and powers of comprehension.

Let a poet passalong the Rue des Lombards, and some stray sweet scent shall set him dreaming of the East; for him, with the odor of the Khuskus grass, would come a vision of Nautch girls in an Eastern bath. The brilliant red lac would call up thoughts of Vedic hymns, of alien creeds and castes; and at a chance contact with an ivory tusk, he would mount an elephant and make love, like the king of Lahore, in a muslin-curtained howdah.

But the petty tradesman does not so much as know whence the raw materials of his business are brought. Of natural history or of chemistry, Birotteau the perfumer, for instance, knew nothing whatever. It is true that he regarded Vauquelin as a great man, but Vauquelin was an exception. César himself was about on a par with the retired grocer, who summed up a discussion on the ways of growing tea by announcing with a knowing air that "there are only two ways of obtaining tea—from Havre or by the overland route." And Birotteau thought that aloes and opium were only to be found in the Rue des Lombards. People told you that attar of roses came from Constantinople, but, like eau-de-cologne, it was made in Paris. These names of foreign places were humbug; they had been invented to amuse the French nation, who cannot abide anything that is made in France. A French merchant has to call his discovery an English invention, or people will not buy it: it is just the same in England, the druggists there tell you that things come from France.

Yet César was not altogether a fool or a dunce; an honest and kind heart shed a lustre over everything that he did and made his a worthy life, and a kindly deed absolves all possible forms of ignorance. His unvarying success gave him assurance: and, in Paris, assurance, the sign of power, is taken for power itself.

César's wife, who had learned to know her husband's character during the early years of their marriage, led a life of

perpetual terror; she represented sound sense and foresight in the partnership; she was doubt, opposition, and fear, while César represented boldness, ambition, activity, the element of chance and undreamed-of good luck. In spite of appearances, the merchant was the weaker vessel, and it was the wife who really had the patience and courage. So it had come to pass that a timid mediocrity, without education, knowledge, or strength of character, a being who could in nowise have succeeded in the world's slipperiest places, was taken for a remarkable man, a man of spirit and resolution, thanks to his instinctive uprightness and sense of justice, to the goodness of a truly Christian soul, and love for the one woman who had been his.

The public only see results. Of all César's circle, only Pillerault and Judge Popinot saw beneath the surface; none of the rest could pronounce on his character. Those twenty or thirty friends, moreover, who met at one another's houses, retailed the same platitudes, repeated the same stale commonplaces, and each one among them regarded himself as superior to his company. There was a rivalry among the women in dinners and dress; each one summed up her husband in some contemptuous word.

Mme. Birotteau alone had the good sense to show respect and deference to her husband in public. She saw in him the man who, in spite of his private weaknesses, had made the wealth and earned the esteem which she shared along with him: though she sometimes privately wondered if all men who were spoken of as superior intellects were like her husband. This attitude of hers contributed not a little to maintain the respect and esteem shown by others to the merchant, in a country where wives are quick-witted enough to belittle their husbands and to complain of them.

The first days of the year 1814, so fatal to Imperial France, were memorable in the Birotteau household for two events, which would have passed almost unnoticed anywhere else; but they were of a kind to leave a deep impression on simple souls like César and his wife, who, looking back upon their past, found no painful memories.

They had engaged a young man of two-and-twenty, Ferdinand du Tillet by name, as first assistant. The lad had come to them from another house in the perfumery trade, where they had declined to give him a percentage of the profits. He was thought to be a genius, and he had been very anxious to go to the *Queen of Roses*, knowing the place, and the people, and their ways. Birotteau had engaged him at a salary of a thousand francs, meaning that du Tillet should be his successor. This Ferdinand du Tillet was destined to exercise so great an influence over the family fortunes, that a few words must be said about him.

He had begun life simply on his Christian name of Ferdinand. There was an immense advantage in anonymity, he thought, at a time when Napoleon was pressing the young men of every family into the army: but if he had no name, he had been born somewhere, and owed his birth to some cruel or voluptuous fancy. Here, in brief, are the few facts known as to his name and designation.

In 1793 a poor girl of Tillet, a little hamlet near the Andelys, bore a child one night in the curé's garden at Tillet, tapped on the shutters, and then drowned herself. The good man received the child, named him after the saint of that day in the calendar, and reared him as if he had been his own son. In 1804 the curé died, and the little property that he left was insufficient to complete the education thus begun. Ferdinand, thrown upon Paris, there led the life of a freebooter, amid chances that might bring him to the scaffold or to fortune, to the bar, the army, commerce, or private life. Ferdinand, compelled to live like a very Figaro, first became a commercial traveler, then, after traveling round France, and seeing life, became a perfumer's assistant, with a fixed determination to make his way at all costs. In 1813 he considered is expedient to ascertain his age, and to acquire a status as a citizen; he therefore petitioned the Tribunal of the Andelys to transfer the entry of his baptism from the church records to the mayor's register; and, further, he asked that they should insert the surname of du Tillet which he had assumed, on

the ground of his exposure at birth in the commune of that name.

He had neither father nor mother; he had no guardian save the procureur-impérial; he was alone in the world, and owed no account of himself to any one; society was to him a harsh stepdame, and he showed no mercy in his dealings with society, knew no guide but his own interests, found all means of success permissible. The Norman, armed with these dangerous capacities, combined with his desire to succeed the crabbed faults for which the natives of his province are, rightly or wrongly, blamed. Beneath his insinuating manner there was a contentious spirit; he was a most formidable antagonist—a blustering litigant, disputing another's least rights audaciously, while he never yielded a point himself. He had time on his side, and wearied out his opponent by his inflexible pertinacity. His principal merits were those of the Scapins of old comedy; he possessed their fertility of resource, their skill in sailing near the wind, their itch to seize on what seems good to have and hold. Indeed, he meant to apply to his poverty a motto which the Abbé Terray applied in statecraft; he would make a clean record by turning honest later on.

He was endowed with strenuous energy, with the military intrepidity which demands good deeds or bad indifferently of everybody, justifying his demand by the theory of personal interest; he was bound to succeed; he had too great a scorn of human nature; he believed too firmly that all men have their price; he was too little troubled by scruples as to the choice of means, when all were alike permissible; his eyes were too fixedly set upon the success and wealth that should purchase absolution for a system of morals which worked thus not to be successful.

Such a man, between the convict's prison on the one hand, and millions upon the other, must of necessity become vindictive, domineering, swift in his decisions, a dissembling Cromwell scheming to cut off the head of probity. A light, mocking wit concealed the depth of his character; mere shop-

man though he was, his ambition knew no bounds; he had comprehended society in one glance of hatred, and said to himself, "You are in my power." He had vowed that he would not marry before he was forty years old. He kept his word with himself.

As to Ferdinand's outward appearance, he was a slim, well-shaped young fellow, with adaptable manners that enabled him at need to take any tone through the whole gamut of society. At first sight his weasel face was not displeasing; but after more observation, you detected the strange expressions which are visible on the surface of those who are not at peace with themselves, or who hear at times the warning voice of conscience. His hard high color glowed under the soft Norman skin. There was a furtive look in the wall-eyes, lined with silver leaf, which grew terrible when they were fixed full on his victim. His voice was husky, as if he had been speaking for long. The thin lips were not unpleasing, but the sharply-pointed nose and slightly rounded forehead revealed a defect of race. Indeed, the coloring of his hair, which looked as if it had been dyed black, indicated the social half-breed, who had his cleverness from a dissolute great lord, his low ideas from the peasant girl, the victim of seduction; who owed his knowledge to an incomplete education; whose vices were those of the waif and stray.

Birotteau learned, to his unbounded amazement, that his assistant went out very elegantly arrayed, came in very late, and went to balls at bankers' and notaries' houses. These habits found no favor with César. To his way of thinking, a shopman should study the ledgers, and think of nothing but the business. The perfumer had no patience with folly. He spoke gently to du Tillet about wearing such fine linen, about visiting cards, which bore the name *F. du Tillet*—manners and customs which, according to his commercial jurisprudence, should be confined to the fashionable world.

But Ferdinand had established himself in this house to play Tartuffe to Birotteau's Orgon: he paid court to Mme. César, tried to seduce her, and gauging his employer with

ng quickness, judged him as his wife had previously d. Du Tillet only said what he meant to say, and was erved and discreet; but he unveiled opinions of man- nd views of life in a fashion that dismayed a timorous, utious woman, who thought it a sin to do the slightest to her neighbor. In spite of the tact which Mme. teau employed, du Tillet felt her contempt for him; Constance, to whom Ferdinand had written several rous epistles, soon noticed a change in the manners of assistant. He began to behave presumptuously, to give s the impression that there was an understanding be- n them. Without informing her husband of her private sons, she recommended him to dismiss the man, and Birot- was of his wife's opinion on this head. Du Tillet's dis- was resolved upon; but one evening, on the Saturday he gave notice, Birotteau balanced his books, as he was nt to do every month, and found that he was three thou- and francs short. He was in terrible consternation. It was much the actual loss that affected him as the suspicion hung over his three assistants and the servant, the d-boy, and the workmen. On whom was he to lay the me? Mme. Birotteau was never away from the cash desk. The book-keeper, who lodged in the house, was a young man ghteen, Popinot by name, a nephew of M. Ragon, and honesty itself. Indeed, on Popinot's own showing, the money was missing, for the cash did not agree with the balance. Husband and wife agreed to say nothing, and to watch every one in the house.

Monday came, and their friends came to spend the evening. Every family in this set entertained in turn. While they played at *bouillotte*, Roguin the notary put down on the table some old louis-d'or which Mme. César had taken some days before of a bride, Mme. d'Espart.

"Have you been robbing the poor-box?" asked the perfumer, laughing.

Roguin said that he had won the money of du Tillet at a banker's house on the previous evening, and du Tillet bore

him out in this without a blush. As for the perfumer, he turned crimson. When the visitors had gone, and Ferdinand was about to go to bed, Birotteau called him down into the shop, on pretence of business to discuss.

"We are three thousand francs short in the cash, du Tillet," the good man said, "and I cannot suspect anybody. The matter of the old louis-d'or seems to be too much against you to be passed over entirely, so we will not go to bed till we have found out the mistake, for, after all, it can be nothing but a mistake. Very likely you took the louis on account of your salary."

Du Tillet owned to having taken the louis. The perfumer thereupon opened the ledger; the assistant's account had not yet been debited with the sum.

"I was in a hurry. I ought to have asked Popinot to enter it," said Ferdinand.

"Quite true," said Birotteau, disconcerted by this off-hand coolness. The Norman had taken the measure of the good folk among whom he had come with a view to making his fortune.

The perfumer and his assistant spent the night in checking the books, the worthy merchant knowing all the while that it was trouble thrown away. As he came and went he slipped three banknotes of a thousand francs each into the safe, pressing them between the side of the drawer and the groove in the safe; then he pretended to be tired out, seemed to be fast asleep, and snored. Du Tillet awakened him in triumph, and showed exaggerated delight over the discovery of the mistake.

The next morning Birotteau scolded little Popinot and Mme. César in public, and waxed wrathful over their carelessness.

A fortnight later, Ferdinand du Tillet entered a stockbroker's office. The perfumery trade did not suit him, he said; he wanted to study banking. At the same time, he spoke of Mme. César in a way that gave the impression that motives of jealousy had procured his dismissal.

A few months later du Tillet came to see his late employer, and asked him to be his surety for twenty thousand francs, to complete the guarantees required in a matter which was to put him in the way of making his fortune. Seeing Birotteau's surprise at this piece of effrontery, du Tillet scowled and asked the perfumer whether he had no confidence in him. Matifat and two men with whom Birotteau did business were there at the time; his indignation did not escape them, though he controlled his anger in their presence. Perhaps du Tillet had returned to honesty; a gambling debt or some woman in distress might have been at the root of that error of his; and the fact that an honest man publicly declined to have anything to do with him might launch a man, still young, and perhaps penitent, on a career of crime and misfortune. The angel of mercy took up the pen and set his signature on du Tillet's papers, saying as he did so that he was heartily glad to do a small service for a lad who had been very useful to him. The color came into the good man's face as he told that kindly lie. Du Tillet could not meet his eyes, and doubtless at that moment swed an eternal enmity, the truceless hate that the angels of darkness bear the angels of light.

Du Tillet kept his balance so skilfully upon the tight rope of speculation, that he was always fashionably dressed, and was apparently rich long before he was rich in reality. When he set up a cabriolet he never put it down again; he held his own in the lofty spheres where pleasure and business are mingled, among the Turcarets of the epoch for whom the crush-room of the Opéra is a branch of the Stock Exchange.

Thanks to Mme. Roguin, whom he had met among the Birotteaus' circle, he became rapidly known in high financial regions. Ferdinand du Tillet had attained a prosperity in nowise delusive; he was on an excellent footing with the firm of Nucingen, to whom Roguin had introduced him; and he had not been slow to secure the Keller connection, and to make friends among the upper banking world. Nobody knew where the young fellow found the vast capital which

he could command, but they set down his luck to his intelligence and honesty.

The Restoration made a personage of César Birotteau, and, in the vortex of political crises, he not unnaturally forgot these two cross events in his household. The tenacity with which he had held to his opinions—for though since his wound it had been a strictly passive tenacity, he still held to his principles for decency's sake—had brought him patronage in high quarters, precisely because he had asked for nothing. He received an appointment as major in the National Guard, though he did not so much as know a single word of command.

In 1815 Napoleon, inimical as ever to Birotteau, ejected him from his post. During the Hundred Days, Birotteau became the *bête noire* of the Liberals in his quarter; for party feeling began to run high in that year among the commercial class, who hitherto had been unanimous in voting for peace for business reasons.

After the second Restoration, the Royalist Government found it necessary to manipulate the municipal body. The prefect wanted to transform Birotteau into a mayor, but, thanks to his wife, the perfumer accepted the less conspicuous position of deputy-mayor. His modesty added not a little to his reputation, and brought him the friendship of the mayor, M. Flamet de la Billardière. Birotteau, who had seen him at the *Queen of Roses* in the days when Royalist plotters used to meet at Ragon's shop, suggested his name to the Prefect of the Seine, who consulted the perfumer on the choice. M. and Mme. Birotteau were never forgotten in the mayor's invitations, and Mme. Birotteau often asked for charitable subscriptions at Saint-Roch in good society.

La Billardière warmly supported Birotteau when it was proposed to distribute the Crosses awarded to the municipal body; when names were being weighed, he laid stress upon César's wound received at Saint-Roch, on his attachment to the Bourbons, and on the respect in which Birotteau was held. So the minister, who, while he endeavored to undo the work

of Napoleon, was wishful to make creatures of his own, and to secure partisans for the Bourbons from the ranks of commerce, and among men of art and science, included Birotteau in the list of those to be distinguished.

This favor, together with the glory which César already shed around him in his Arrondissement, put him in a position that was bound to magnify the ideas of a man who had met hitherto with nothing but success; and when the mayor told him of the approaching distinction, it was the final argument which urged the perfumer into the speculation which he had just disclosed to his wife; for it opened up a way of quitting the perfumery trade, and of rising to the upper ranks of the Parisian bourgeoisie.

César was forty years old. Hard work at his factory had set one or two premature wrinkles in his face, and slightly silvered the long bushy hair, on which the constant pressure of his hat had impressed a glossy ring. The outlines of his hair described five points on his forehead, which told a story of simplicity of life. There was nothing alarming about the bushy eyebrows, for the blue eyes, with their clear, straightforward expression, were in keeping with the honest man's brow. His nose, broken at his birth, and blunt at the tip, gave him the astonished look of the typical Parisian cockney. His lips were very thick, his chin heavy and straight. It was a high-colored face with square outlines, and a peculiar disposition of the wrinkles,—altogether it was of the ingenuous, shrewd peasant type; and his evident physical strength, his sturdy limbs, broad shoulders, and big feet, all denoted the countryman transported to Paris. The large hands, covered with hair, the creases in the plump finger-joints, and broad, square-shaped nails at the tips, would alone have attested his origin if there had not been signs of it about his whole person.

He always wore the bland smile with which a shopkeeper welcomes a customer; but this smile, assumed for business purposes in his case, was the outward and visible expression of inward content, and reflected the serenity of a kindly soul.

His distrust of his species was strictly confined to the business; he parted company with his shrewdness as he came away from the Exchange or shut his ledger. Suspicion for him was one of the exigencies of business, like his printed bill-heads.

There was a comical mixture of assurance, fatuity, and good-nature in his face, which gave it a certain character of its own, and redeemed it, to some extent, from the vapid uniformity of Parisian bourgeois countenances. But for the expression of artless wonder and trustfulness, people would have stood too much in awe of him; it was thus that he paid his quota of absurdity that put him on a footing of equality with his kind.

It was a habit of his to cross his hands behind him while speaking; and when he meant to say something particularly civil or striking, he gradually raised himself on tiptoe once or twice, and came down heavily upon his heels, as if to emphasize his remark. Sometimes in the height of a discussion he would suddenly swing himself round, take a step or two as if in search of objections, and then turn abruptly upon his opponent. He never interrupted anybody, and not seldom fell a victim to his finer punctilious observance of good manners, for others did not scruple to take the words out of his mouth, and when the worthy man came away he had been unable to put in a word.

In his wide experience of business he had acquired habits which others sometimes described as a mania. For instance, if a bill had not been met, he would put it in the hands of the process-server, and give himself no further trouble about it, save to receive the capital, interest, and court expenses. The matter might drive the customer into bankruptcy, and then César went no further. He never attended a meeting of creditors; his name never appeared in any list; he kept his claims. This system, together with an implacable contempt for bankrupts, had been handed down to him by old M. Ragon, who, after a long commercial experience, had come to the conclusion that the meagre and uncertain dividend paid

under the circumstances was a very poor return for the time wasted in law proceedings, and held that he could spend his time to better purpose than in running about after excuses for dishonesty.

"If the bankrupt is an honest man, and makes his way an, he will pay you," M. Ragon was wont to say. "If he has nothing, and is simply unfortunate, what is the good of tormenting him? And if he is a rogue, you will get nothing in any case. If you have a name for being hard on people, they will not try to make terms with you; and so long as they can pay at all, you are the man whom they will pay."

César kept his appointments punctually; he would wait for ten minutes, and nothing would induce him to stay any longer, a characteristic which was a cause of punctuality in others who had to do with him.

His dress was in keeping with his appearance and habits. No power on earth would have induced him to resign the white lawn neck-cloths with drooping ends, embroidered by his wife or daughter His white drill waistcoats, adorned with a double row of buttons, descended low upon his prominent abdomen, for Birotteau was inclined to corpulence. He wore blue breeches, black silk stockings, and walking-shoes adorned with ribbon bows that were apt to come unfastened. Out of doors his too ample green overcoat and broad-brimmed hat gave him a somewhat Quakerly appearance. On Sunday evenings he wore a coat of chestnut-brown cloth, with long tails and ample skirts, and black silk breeches; the corners of the inevitable waistcoat were turned down a little to display the pleated shirt-front beneath, and there were gold buckles on his shoes. Until the year 1819 his person was further adorned by two parallel lines of watch-chain, but he only wore the second when in full dress.

Such was César Birotteau—a worthy soul, from whom the mysterious powers that preside at the making of man had withheld the faculty of seeing life or politics as a whole, and the capacity of rising above the social level of the lower middle class; in all things he was destined to follow in the ruts

of the old road; he had caught his opinions like an infection, and he put them in practice without examining into them. But if he was blind, he was a good man; if he was not very clever, he was deeply religious, and his heart was pure. In that heart there shone but one love, the light of his life and its motive power; for his desire to rise in the world, like the meagre knowledge that he had learned in it, had its source in his love for his wife and daughter.

As for Mme. César, at that time, at the age of thirty-seven, she so exactly resembled the Venus of Milo, that when the Duc de Rivière sent the beautiful statue to France, all her acquaintance recognized the likeness. A few short months, and trouble so swiftly spread its sallow tinge over the dazzling fairness of her face, so ruthlessly darkened and hollowed the blue-veined circles in which the beautiful hazel eyes were set, that she came to look like an aged Madonna; for in the wreck of her beauty she never lost her sweet ingenuousness, though there was a sad expression in the clear eyes; and it was impossible not to see in her a still beautiful woman, staid in her demeanor, and full of dignity. Moreover, during this ball of César's planning, her beauty was to shine forth radiantly for the last time to the admiration of beholders.

Every life has its apogee; there is a time in every existence when active causes bring about exactly proportionate results. This high noon of life, when the vital forces are evenly balanced and put forth in all the glory of their strength, is common not only to organic life; you will find it even in the history of cities and nations and institutions and ideas, in commerce, and in every kind of human effort, for, like noble families and dynasties, these too have their birth and rise and fall.

How comes it that this argument of waxing and waning is applied so inexorably to everything throughout the system of things?—to death as to life; for in times of pestilence, death runs his course, abates, returns again, lies dormant. Who knows but that our globe itself is a rocket somewhat longer lived than other fireworks?

History, telling over and over again the reasons of the rise and fall of all that has been in the world in the past, might be a warning to man that there is a moment when the active play of all his faculties must cease; but neither conquerors, nor actors, nor women, nor writers heed the wholesome admonition. César Birotteau, who should have looked upon himself as having reached the apogee of his career, mistook the summit for the starting-point. He did not know the reason of the downfalls of which history is full; nay, neither kings nor peoples have made any effort to engrave in imperishable characters the causes of the catastrophes of which the history of royal and of commercial houses affords such conspicuous examples. Why should not pyramids be reared anew to put us constantly in mind of the immutable law which should govern the affairs of nations as well as of individuals: *When the effect produced is no longer in direct relation with nor in exact proportion to the cause, disorganization sets in?* And yet—these monuments are all about us—in legends, in the stones that cry out to us of a past, and bear perpetual record to the freaks of a stubborn Fate whose hand sweeps away our illusions, and makes it clear to us that the greatest events resolve themselves at last into an Idea, and the "Tale of Troy" and the "Story of Napoleon" are poems and nothing more.

Would that this story might be the Epic of the Bourgeoisie; there are dealings of Fate with man which inspire no voice, because they lack grandeur, yet are even for that very reason immense: for this is not the story of an isolated soul, but of a whole nation of sorrows.

César as he dropped off to sleep feared that his wife might bring forward some peremptory objection in the morning, and laid it upon himself to wake betimes and settle everything. As soon as it grew light, he rose noiselessly, leaving his wife asleep, dressed quickly, and went down into the shop just as the boy was taking down the numbered shutters. Birotteau, finding himself in solitary possession, stood waiting in the doorway for the assistants, watching critically meanwhile

the way in which Raguet the errand boy discharged his duties, for Birotteau was an old hand. The weather was magnificent in spite of the cold.

"Popinot, fetch your hat and your walking shoes, and tell M. Célestin to come down; you and I will go to the Tuileries and have a little talk together," said he, when Anselme came.

Popinot, that admirable foil to du Tillet, whom one of those happy chances which induce a belief in a protecting Providence had established in César's household, will play so great a part in this story, that it is necessary to give a sketch of him here.

Mme. Ragon's maiden name was Popinot. She had two brothers. One of them, the youngest of the family, was at the present time a judge in the Tribunal of First Instance of the Seine. The older had gone into the wool-trade, had lost his patrimony, and died, leaving his only son to the Ragons and his brother the judge, who had no children. The child's mother had died at his birth.

Mme. Ragon had found this situation for her nephew, and hoped to see him succeed to Birotteau. Anselme Popinot (for that was his name) was short and club-footed, a dispensation common to Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and Talleyrand, lest others thus afflicted should be too much discouraged. He had the brilliant complexion covered with freckles which usually distinguishes red-haired people; but a clear forehead, eyes like agates streaked with gray, a pretty mouth, a pale face, the charm of youthful diffidence, and a want of confidence in himself, due to his physical deformity, aroused a kindly feeling towards him in others. We love the weak, and people felt interested in Popinot.

Little Popinot, as everybody called him, took after his family. They were people essentially religious, whose virtues were informed by intelligence, whose quiet lives were full of good deeds. So the child, brought up by his uncle the judge, united all the qualities pleasing in youth; he was a good and affectionate boy, a little bashful, but full of enthusiasm; docile as a lamb, but hard-working, faithful, and

eady, endowed with all the virtues of a Christian in the rly days of the Church.

When Popinot heard of the proposed walk to the Tuileries, most unlooked-for remark that his awe-inspiring employer could have made at that time of day, his thoughts went to his own settlement in life, and thence all at once to Césarine, the real queen of roses, the living sign of the house. He had fallen in love on his very first day in the shop, two months before du Tillet's departure. He was obliged to stop more than once on his way upstairs, his heart so swelled, and his pulses beat so hard.

In another moment he came down, followed by Célestin, the first assistant. Then Anselme and his employer set out without a word for the Tuileries.

Anselme Popinot was just twenty-one years of age; Birotteau had married at one-and-twenty, so Anselme saw no hindrance to his marriage with Césarine on that score. It was her beauty and her father's wealth that set enormous obstacles in the way of such ambitious wishes as his, but love grows with every up-leaping of hope; the wilder the hopes, the more he clung to them, and his longings grew the stronger for the distance between him and his love. Happy boy, who in a time when all and sundry are brought down to the same level, when every head is crowned with a precisely similar hat, can still contrive to create a distance between a perfumer's daughter and himself—the scion of an old Parisian family! And he was happy, in spite of his doubts and fears; every day of his life he sat next to Césarine at dinner; he set about his business with a zeal and enthusiasm that left no element of drudgery in his work; he did everything in the name of Césarine, and never wearied. At one-and-twenty devotion is food sufficient for love.

"He will be a merchant some of these days; he will get on," César would say, speaking of Anselme to Mme. Ragon, and he would praise Anselme's activity in the filling-out department, extolling his quickness at comprehending the mysteries of the craft, relating how that, when goods were to be sent

off in a hurry, Anselme would roll up his sleeves and work bare-armed at packing the cases and nailing down the lids, and the lame lad would do more than all the rest of them put together.

There was another serious obstacle in the way of the orphan's success. It was a well-known and recognized fact that Alexandre Crottat, Roguin's head-clerk, the son of a rich farmer of la Brie, hoped to marry Césarine; and there were other difficulties yet more formidable. In the depths of Popinot's heart there lay buried sad secrets which set a yet wider gulf between him and Césarine. The Ragons, on whom he might have counted, were in difficulties; the orphan boy was happy to take them his scanty salary to help them to eke out a living. But in spite of all these things, he hoped to succeed! More than once he had caught a glance from Césarine, and beneath her apparent pride he had dared to read a secret thought full of tender hopes in the depths of her blue eyes. So he worked on, set in a ferment by that gleam of hope, tremulous and mute, like all young men in a like case when life is breaking into blossom.

"Popinot," the good man began, "is your aunt quite well?"

"Yes, sir."

"Somehow she has seemed to me to have an anxious look for some time past; can something have gone askew with them? Look here, my boy, you must not make a stranger of me, that am almost like one of the family, for I have known your Uncle Ragon these five-and-twenty years. When I first came to him, I was fresh from the country, and wore a pair of hobnailed boots. They call the place the Treasury Farm, but all I brought away with me was one gold louis which my godmother gave me, Madame the late Marquise d'Uxelles, who was related to le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse de Lenoncourt, who are among our patrons. So I always say a prayer every Sunday for her and all the family; and her niece, Mme. de Mortsauf, in Touraine, has all her perfumery from us. Customers are always coming to me through them. There is M. de Vandenesse, for example, who spends twelve hundred

francs with us every year. One ought to be grateful from prudence, if one is not grateful by nature; but I am a well-wisher to you, without an afterthought, and for your own sake."

"Ah, sir, if you will allow me to say so, you had a level head."

"No, my boy, no; that won't do everything. I don't say that my headpiece isn't as good as another's, but I stuck to honesty through thick and thin; I was steady, and I never loved any one but my wife. Love is a fine *vehicle*, a neat expression of M. de Villèle's yesterday at the Tribune."

"Love!" cried Popinot. "Oh! sir, do you——?"

"Stop a bit, stop a bit! There is old Roguin coming along the further side of the Place Louis XV. at eight o'clock in the morning. What can the old boy be about?" said César to himself, and he forgot Anselme Popinot and the hazel-nut oil.

His wife's theories came up in his memory, and instead of turning into the garden of the Tuileries, he walked on to meet the notary. Anselme followed at a distance, quite at a loss to explain the sudden interest which Birotteau appeared to take in a matter so unimportant; but very happy in the encouragement which he derived from his employer's little speech about hobnailed boots, and louis-d'or, and love.

Roguin, a tall, burly man, with a pimpled face, an almost bald forehead, and black hair, had not formerly been lacking in comeliness; and he had been young and ambitious once too, and from a mere clerk had come to be a notary; but now a keen observer would have read in his face the exhaustion and fatigue of a jaded seeker after pleasure. When a man plunges into the mire of excess, his face hardly escapes without a splash, and the lines engraved on Roguin's countenance and its florid color were alike ignoble. Instead of the pure glow which suffuses the tissues of men of temperate life and imparts a bloom of health, there was visible in Roguin the tainted blood inflamed by a strain against which the body rebelled. His nose was meanly turned up at the end, as is apt to be the case with those in whom humors taking this channel

induce an internal affection, which a virtuous Queen of France innocently believed to be a misfortune common to the species, never having approached any man but the King sufficiently closely to discover her mistake. Roguin's efforts to disguise his infirmity by taking quantities of Spanish snuff served rather to aggravate the troublesome symptoms, which had been the principal cause of his misfortunes.

Is it not carrying flattery of society somewhat too far to paint individuals always in false colors, to conceal in certain cases the real causes of their vicissitudes, so often brought about by disease? Physical ills, in their moral aspects and the influences that they bring to bear on the mechanism of life, have perhaps been too much neglected hitherto by the historian of manners. Mme. César had rightly guessed the secret of Roguin's married life.

His wife, a charming girl, the only daughter of Chevrel, the banker, felt an unconquerable repugnance for the poor notary, which dated from the night of her marriage, and had been determined to demand an immediate divorce. But Roguin, too happy to have a wife who brought him five hundred thousand francs, to say nothing of her expectations, had implored her not to enter her plea, leaving her her liberty, and accepting all the consequences of such a compact. Mme. Roguin, mistress of the situation, treated her husband as a courtesan treats an elderly adorer. Roguin soon found his wife too dear, and, like many another Parisian, had a second establishment in the town. At first the expenditure did not exceed a moderate limit.

For a while Roguin found, at no great outlay, grisettes who were too glad of his protection; but at the end of three years he fell a prey to a violent sexagenarian passion for one of the most magnificent creatures of the time, known as *La belle Hollandaise* in the calendars of prostitution, for she shortly afterwards fell back into that gulf, which her death made illustrious. One of Roguin's clients had formerly brought her to Paris from Bruges; and when, in 1815, political considerations forced him to fly, he made her over to the notary.

Roguin had taken a little house in the Champs-Élysées for his enchantress; he had furnished it handsomely, and had allowed himself to be led by her, until he had squandered away his fortune to satisfy her extravagant whims.

The gloomy expression, which vanished from Roguin's countenance at the sight of his client, was connected with mysterious events, wherein lay the secret of du Tillet's rapid success. While du Tillet was still under Birotteau's roof, on the first Sunday which gave him an opportunity of observing how M. and Mme. Roguin were situated with regard to each other, his plans had undergone a change. His designs upon Mme. César had been subordinated to another purpose; he had meant to compel an offer of Césarine's hand as compensation for repulsed advances; but it cost him the less to give up this marriage since he had discovered that César was not rich, as he had believed. Then du Tillet played the spy on the notary, insinuated himself into his confidence, obtained an introduction to *La belle Hollandaise*, ascertained the terms on which she stood with Roguin, and learned that she was threatening to dismiss her adorer if he curtailed her extravagance. *La belle Hollandaise* was one of those scatter-brained creatures who take money without disturbing themselves as to how it was made, or how they come by it; women who would give a banquet with a parricide's crowns. She took no thought for the morrow, and was careless of yesterday. The future for her meant after dinner, and eternity lay between the present moment and the end of the month, even when she had bills to fall due. Du Tillet was delighted to find a first lever to his hand, and began his campaign by obtaining a reduction from *La belle Hollandaise*, who agreed to solace Roguin's existence for thirty thousand francs instead of fifty thousand, a kind of service which sexagenarian passion rarely forgets.

At length, one night after deep potations, Roguin opened out his financial position to du Tillet in an after-supper confidence. His real estate was mortgaged to its full value under his wife's marriage settlement, and in his infatuation

he had appropriated moneys deposited with him by his clients; more than half the value of his practice had been embezzled in this way. When he had run through the rest, the unfortunate Roguin would blow his brains out, for he thought he should diminish the scandal of his failure by exciting the pity of the public. Du Tillet, listening, beheld success, rapid and assured, gleaming like a flash of lightning through the obscurity of drunkenness. He reassured Roguin, and repaid his confidence by persuading him to fire his pistols into the air.

"When a man of your calibre takes such risks upon himself," said he, "he ought not to flounder about like a fool; he should set to work boldly."

Du Tillet counseled Roguin to help himself to a large sum of money, and to intrust it to him (du Tillet) to speculate boldly with it on the Stock Exchange, or in some other enterprise among the hundreds that were being started at that speculative epoch. If the stroke was successful, the two of them should found a bank, speculate with the deposits, and with the profits the notary should satisfy his cravings. If the luck went against them, Roguin should go abroad, instead of killing himself, for his devoted du Tillet would be faithful to the last penny. It was a rope flung out to a drowning man, and Roguin did not see that the perfumer's salesman was fastening it round his neck.

Du Tillet, master of Roguin's secret, used it to establish his power over the wife, the husband, and the mistress. Mme. Roguin, to whom he gave warning of a disaster, which she was far from suspecting, accepted du Tillet's assiduities, and then it was that the latter left the perfumer's shop, feeling that his future was secure. It was not difficult to persuade the mistress to risk a sum of money that in case of need she might not be obliged to go on the street. The wife looked into her affairs, and accumulated a small amount of capital, which she handed over to the man in whom her husband placed confidence, for at the outset the notary put a hundred thousand francs into the hands of his accomplice. Brought

in this way into close contact with Mme. Roguin, du Tillet contrived to transform interest into affection, and to inspire a violent passion in that handsome woman. In his speculations on the Stock Exchange he naturally shared in the profits of his three associates, but this was not enough for him; he had the audacity to come to an understanding with an opponent, who refunded to him the amount of fictitious losses, for he played for his own hand as well as for his clients.

As soon as he had fifty thousand francs, he was sure of making a large fortune. He watched with the eagle's eye that was one of his characteristics, over the phases of political life in France; he speculated for a fall in the Funds during the campaign of France, and for a rise when the Bourbons came back.

Two months after the return of Louis XVIII., Mme. Roguin possessed two hundred thousand francs, and du Tillet a hundred thousand crowns. In the notary's eyes this young man was an angel; he had restored order in his affairs. But *La belle Hollandaise* fell a victim to a wasting complaint which nothing could cure, a virulent cancer called Maxime de Trailles, one of the late Emperor's pages. Du Tillet discovered the woman's real name from her signature to a document. It was Sarah Gobseck. Then he remembered that he had heard of a money-lender of the name of Gobseck; and, struck by the coincidence, paid a visit to that aged discounter of bills, and providence of young men with prospects, to find out how this female relative's credit stood with him. The bill-broking Brutus proved inexorable where his grand-niece was concerned, but du Tillet himself managed to find favor in his eyes by posing as Sarah's banker with capital to invest. The Norman and the money-lender found each other congenial.

Gobseck wanted a clever young fellow who could look after a bit of business abroad for him just then. The return of the Bourbons had taken a State auditor by surprise. To this financier, wishful to stand well at Court, it had occurred that he might buy up the debts contracted by the Princes in Ger-

many during the emigration. He offered the profits of the affair, which for him was purely a matter of policy, to any one who would advance the necessary money. Old Gobseck had no mind to disburse moneys over and above the market value of the debts, into which a shrewd representative must first examine. Money-lenders trust nobody; they must always have a guarantee; the occasion is omnipotent with them; they are ice when they have no need of a man, affable and obliging when he is likely to be useful. Du Tillet knew the immense part played, below the surface, in the Paris money market by Werbrust and Gigonnet, discount brokers of the Rue Saint-Denis and Rue Saint-Martin, and by Palma, a banker in the Faubourg Poissonnière, who was almost always associated with Gobseck. He therefore offered to pay down caution money, requiring on his own side a share in the profits of the transaction, and asking that these gentlemen should employ in the money-lending business the capital which he should deposit with them. In this way he secured supporters. Then he accompanied M. Clément Chardin des Lupeaulx on a trip to Germany during the Hundred Days, and came back with the Second Restoration, with some added knowledge that should lead to success rather than with actual wealth. He had had an initiation into the secrets of one of the cleverest schemers in Paris; he had won the goodwill of the man whom he had been set to watch; a dexterous juggler had laid bare for him the springs of political intrigue and the rules of the game.

Du Tillet's intelligence was of the order which understands at half a word; this journey formed him. On his return he found Mme. Roguin still faithful; but the poor notary was expecting Ferdinand with quite as much impatience as his wife. *La belle Hollandaise* had ruined him again!

Du Tillet, questioning *La belle Hollandaise*, could not elicit from her an account that represented all the money which she had squandered. And then it was that he discovered the secret so carefully kept from him—Sarah Gobseck's infatuation for Maxime de Trailles, known at the very outset

of his career of vice and debauchery for a political hanger-on of a kind indispensable to all good government, and for an insatiable gambler. After this discovery du Tillet understood old Gobseck's indifference to his grand-niece.

At this critical juncture, du Tillet the banker (for by this time he was a banker) strongly recommended Roguin to put something for a rainy day; to engage some of his richest clients in a business speculation, and then to keep back considerable sums out of the money paid over to him, in case he should be compelled to become a bankrupt in the course of a second career of speculation. After various rises and falls in the price of stocks, which brought luck only to du Tillet and Mme. Roguin, the notary's hour struck. He was insolvent, and thereupon, in his extremity, his closest friend exploited him, and du Tillet discovered that speculation in building land in the neighborhood of the Madeleine. Naturally, one hundred thousand francs which Birotteau had deposited with Roguin until an investment should [illegible] for them, were paid over to du Tillet, who, upon compassing the perfumer's ruin, made Roguin understand that he ran less risk by ensnaring his own intimate friends in his toils.

"A friend," said du Tillet, "will not go all lengths even in [illegible]."

There are not many people at this present day who know what the land was worth per foot in the district of the Madeleine at this time; but the building lots must necessarily shortly be sold for more than their momentary depreciation, [illegible] by the necessity of finding purchasers who would profit by the opportunity. Now it was du Tillet's idea to reap the benefit without keeping his money locked up in a [illegible] speculation. In other words, he meant to kill the [illegible] that a corpse which he knew how to resuscitate might be knocked down to him.

In such emergencies as this, the Gobsecks, Palmas, Werbrusts, and Gigonnets all lent each other a hand, but du Tillet did not know them well enough to ask them to help

him; and, besides, he meant to hide his action in the matter so thoroughly that, while he steered the whole business, he might receive all the profits and none of the disgrace of the robbery. So he saw the necessity of one of those animated lay figures termed *men of straw* in commercial phrase. The man who had once before acted the part of a stock-jobber for him seemed to be a suitable tool to his hand, and he infringed the Divine rights by creating a man. Of a former commercial traveler, without a farthing on this earth, with no ability, no capacity save for empty rambling talk on all sorts of subjects, and but just sufficient wit to suffer himself to be drilled in a part and to play it without compromising the piece, and yet endowed with the rarest sense of honor—that is to say, a faculty for silently accepting the dishonor of his principal—of him, du Tillet made a banker, the originator and promoter of commercial enterprises on the largest scale; him he metamorphosed into the head of the firm of Claparon.

Should the exigencies of du Tillet's affairs at any time demand a bankruptcy, it was to be Charles Claparon's fate to be delivered over to Jews and Pharisees, and Claparon knew it. Still, for the present, the scraps and pickings that fell to his share were an El Dorado for a poor devil who, when his chum du Tillet came across him, was sauntering along the Boulevards with no prospects beyond the two-franc piece in his pockets; so his friendship for and devotion to du Tillet, swelled by a gratitude that did not look to the future, and stimulated by the cravings of a dissolute and disreputable life, led him to say *Amen* to everything.

When he had once sold his honor, he saw that it was risked with so much prudence, that at length he came to have a sort of dog-like attachment for his old comrade du Tillet. Claparon was a very ugly performing poodle, but he was ready at any moment to make the leap of Curtius for his master.

In the present scheme Claparon was to represent one-half of the purchasers of the lots, as Birotteau represented the

[illegible] hand. Then the bills which Claparon would receive [illegible] au should be discounted by some money-lender, [illegible]se name du Tillet would borrow; so that when Roguin [illegible]onded with the rest of the purchase-money, Birotteau [illegible]uld be left on the brink of ruin. Du Tillet meant to direct [illegible] the assignees; there should be a forced sale of [illegible]uilding land, and du Tillet meant to be the purchaser; [illegible] would buy it for about half its value, and pay for it with [illegible] money and the dividend of the bankruptcy; so [illegible]er different names he was in possession of the money paid [illegible] by the perfumer and his creditor to boot.

[illegible]as a prospect of a goodly share of the spoils that led [illegible]oguin to meddle in this scheme; but he had practically sur[illegible]ed himself at discretion to a man who could and did [illegible] the lion's part. It was impossible to bring du Tillet [illegible] court of law, and the notary in a remote part of [illegible]witzerland, where he found beauties of a less expensive [illegible], was lucky to have a bone flung to him once a month [illegible]

The ugly scheme was no deliberate invention, no outcome [illegible]he broodings of a tragedian weaving a plot, but the result [illegible]umstances. Hatred, unaccompanied by a desire for re[illegible], is as seed sown upon the granite rock; du Tillet swore [illegible] revenged upon César Birotteau, and the prompting was [illegible] the most natural things in the world; if it had been [illegible]herwise, there had been no quarrel between angels of dark[illegible]nd the angels of light.

[illegible] Tillet could not, without great inconvenience, murder [illegible]ne man in Paris who knew that he had been guilty of [illegible] theft; but he could sully his old master's name and crush him until his testimony was no longer admissible. For [illegible]g time past the thought of vengeance had been germi[illegible]g in his mind; but it had come to nothing. The rush [illegible]ife in Paris is so swift, and so full of stir, chance counts [illegible]r so much in it, that even the most energetic haters do not [illegible]k very far ahead; yet, on the other hand, if the constant [illegible] and flow is unfavorable to premeditated action, it affords

excellent opportunities for carrying out projects that lurk in politic brains, clever enough to lie in wait for the chances that come with the tide. Du Tillet had had a dim inkling of the possibility of ruining César from the moment when Roguin first opened out his case to him; and he had not miscalculated.

Roguin, meanwhile, on the point of leaving his idol, drained the rest of the philtre from the broken cup, going daily to the Champs-Élysées, and returning home in the small hours. There were grounds, therefore, for Mme. César's suspicious theories. When a man has made up his mind to play such a part as du Tillet had assigned to Roguin, he perforce acquires the talents of a great actor; he has the eyes of a lynx and the penetration of a seer; he finds ways of magnetizing his dupe, so the notary had seen Birotteau long before Birotteau set eyes on him; and when he saw that he was recognized, he held out a hand while he was still at some distance.

"I have just been making the will of a great person who [illegible] a week to live," said he, with the most natural air [illegible] the world, "but they have treated me like a village doctor [illegible] carriage to fetch me, and let me go home afoot."

[illegible] cloud of suspicion which had darkened the per- [illegible] was cleared away at these words; but Roguin had [illegible] and took good care not to be the first to speak [illegible] burdening land, for he meant to give his victim the [illegible]

"A[illegible] a w[illegible] come marriage-contracts," said Birotteau; such [illegible] life. Eh! by the by, Roguin, old fellow, when do [illegible] of it with the Madeleine, eh?" and he tapped [illegible] chest. Among men, the best-conducted [illegible] try to appear a bit of a rogue with the women.

"Well, [illegible] is to-day or never," returned the notary with a diplomatic look. "We are afraid that the affair will get noised abroad; already two of my richest clients want to go into the speculation, and are very keen about it. So you

can take it or leave it. After twelve o'clock this morning I shall draw up the deeds, and until one o'clock it is open to you to join us if you choose. Good-bye. Xandrot made a rough draft of the documents for me last night, and I am about to read them through this very minute."

"All right, the thing is settled, you have my word," cried Birotteau, hurrying after the notary, and striking hands upon it. "Take the hundred thousand francs that were to have been my daughter's portion."

"Good," said Roguin, as he walked away.

In the brief interval as Birotteau returned to young Popinot he felt a sensation of feverish heat run through him, his diaphragm contracted, sounds rang in his ears.

"What is the matter, sir?" asked the assistant, looking at his employer's pale face.

"Ah, my boy, I have just concluded a big piece of business with a single word. No one in such a position can help feeling some emotion. You know all about it, however; and besides, I brought you here so that we could talk comfortably where no one will listen to us. Your aunt is pinched; what did she lose her money in? Tell me about it."

"My uncle and aunt put their capital into M. Nucingen's bank, and were obliged to take over shares in the Worstchin mines in settlement of their claims; no dividends have been paid on them as yet, and at their time of life it is difficult to live on hope."

"Then how do they live?"

"They have been so good as to accept my salary."

"Good, Anselme, good," said the perfumer, looking up with a tear in his eyes; "you are worthy of the attachment I feel for you. And you shall be well rewarded for your application in my service."

As he spoke, the merchant grew greater in his own estimation as well as in Popinot's eyes; a sense of his adventitious superiority was artlessly revealed in his homely and paternal way of speaking.

"What! Can you have guessed my passion for——?"

"For whom?" asked the perfumer.

"For Mademoiselle Césarine."

"Boy!" cried Birotteau, "you are very bold. But keep your secret carefully; I promise to forget it, and you shall go out of the house to-morrow. I don't blame you; the devil no! In your place I should have done just the same. She is so pretty."

"Ah, sir!" cried the assistant, in such a perspiration that his shirt felt damp.

"This cannot be settled in a day, my boy. Césarine is her own mistress, and her mother has her ideas. So keep yourself to yourself, wipe your eyes, hold your heart well in hand, and we will say no more about it. I should not blush to have you for a son-in-law. As the nephew of M. Popinot, judge of a Tribunal of First Instance, and as the Ragons' nephew, you have as good a right to make your way as another, but there are *ifs* and *buts* and *ands!* What a devil of a notion you have sprung upon me in the middle of a talk about business! There, sit you down on that bench, and business first and love affairs after.—Now, Popinot, is there mettle in you?" said Birotteau, looking at his assistant. "Do you feel that you have courage enough to wrestle with those that are stronger than you? for a hand-to-hand fight, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"To keep up a long and dangerous combat?——"

"What is it?"

"To drive Macassar Oil from the field!" cried Birotteau, drawing himself up like one of Plutarch's heroes. "We must not undervalue the enemy; he is strong, well intrenched, and formidable. Macassar Oil has been well pushed. It is a clever idea, and the shape of the bottles is out of the common. I had thoughts of a triangular bottle for this plan of mine, but after mature reflection, I am inclined for little blown glass flasks covered with wicker work; they would look mysterious, and the public like anything that tickles their curiosity."

"It would cost a good deal," said Popinot. "Everything

ought to be on the cheapest possible footing, so as to allow a heavy discount to the trade."

"Right, my boy; those are sound principles of business. Bear in mind that Macassar Oil will show fight! 'Tis a specious thing; the name is attractive. It is put before the public as a foreign importation, and we, unluckily, are in our own country. Look here, Popinot, do you feel strong enough to do for Macassar? To begin with, you will oust it from the export trade; it seems that Macassar really does come from the Indies, so it is more natural to send French goods to the Indians than to ship them back the stuff that they are supposed to send to us. So there's the export trade for you! But it will have to be fought out abroad, and all over the country; and Macassar Oil has been so well advertised, that it is no use blinking the fact that it has a hold: it is pushed everywhere, and the public are familiar with it."

"I will do for it!" cried Popinot, with eyes on fire.

"And how?" returned Birotteau. "It is like the impetuosity of these young people! Just hear me out."

Anselme looked like a soldier presenting arms to a Marshal of France.

"I have invented an oil, Popinot, an oil which invigorates the scalp, stimulates the growth of the hair, and preserves its color—an oil for both sexes. The essence should have no less success than the Pâte and the Lotion, but I do not want to exploit the secret by myself; I am thinking of retiring from business. I want *you*, my boy, to bring out the *Comagen* from the Latin word *coma*, which means hair (so M. Alibert, physician to the King, told me). In *Bérénice*, Racine's tragedy too, there is a king of Comagène, a lover of the beautiful queen who was so famous for her hair; no doubt it was out of compliment to her that he called his kingdom Comagène. How clever these great men of genius are! they descend to the smallest details."

Little Popinot listened to these incongruities, evidently meant for his benefit, who had had some education, and yet kept his countenance.

"Anselme," continued Birotteau, "I have cast my eyes on you as the founder of a wholesale druggist's business in the Rue des Lombards. I will be a sleeping-partner, and find you the capital to start it with. When we have begun with the Comagen, we will try essence of vanilla and essence of peppermint. In short, by degrees we will go into the drug trade and revolutionize it, by selling articles in a concentrated form instead of the raw products. Are you satisfied, ambitious young man?"

Anselme was so overcome that he could not reply, but his tear-filled eyes made answer for him. It seemed to him that this offer was the outcome of a fatherly indulgence which said, "Deserve Césarine by earning wealth and respect."

"I too will succeed, sir," he said at last, taking Birotteau's emotion for astonishment.

"Just what I was at your age," cried the perfumer; "those were just the very words I used! Whether you have my daughter or no, at any rate you will have a fortune. Well, my boy, what has come to you?"

"Let me hope that by gaining the one I may win the other."

"I do not forbid you to hope, my dear fellow," said Birotteau, touched by Anselme's tone.

"Very well, sir; may I begin to look out at once for a shop, so as to begin as soon as possible?"

"Yes, my boy. To-morrow we will shut ourselves up in the factory. You might look in at Livingston's on your way to the Rue des Lombards, and see if my hydraulic press will be in working order by to-morrow. To-night, at dinner-time, we will go to see that great man, kind M. Vauquelin, and ·k him about this. He has been investigating the composition of hair quite lately, trying to find out its coloring mat·er, and where it comes from, and what hair is made of.—It all lies in that, Popinot. You shall know my secret, and all that remains to do is to exploit it intelligently.—Look in at Pieri Bérard's before you go round to Livingston.—My boy, M. Vauquelin's disinterestedness is one of the great

troubles of my life. You cannot get him to accept anything. Luckily, I found out from Chiffreville that he wanted a Madonna at Dresden, engraved by one Müller, and after two years of inquiry for it in Germany, Bérard has found a copy at last—a proof before letters on India paper; it cost fifteen hundred francs, my boy. And now to-day our benefactor shall see it in the ante-chamber when he comes to the door with us; framed, of course, you will make sure of that. So in that way we shall recall ourselves to his memory, my wife and I; for as to gratitude, we have put his name in our prayers every day these sixteen years. For my part, I shall never forget him; but, you know, Popinot, these men of science are so deep in their work, that they forget everything, wife and children, and those they have done a good turn to. As for us, like of us, our little intelligence permits us to have warm hearts at any rate. That is some comfort for not being a great man. These gentlemen at the Institute are all brain, as you see; you will never come across one of them in a church. There is M. Vauquelin, always in his study when he isn't in his laboratory; I like to believe though that he thinks of God while he analyzes His works.—This is the understanding: I am to find the capital, I will put you in possession of my secret, and we will divide the profits equally, so there will be no need to draw up a deed. Good success to us both! We shall tune our pipes. Off with you, my boy; I have affairs of my own to see after. One moment, Popinot; in three weeks' time I am going to give a grand ball, have a suit of clothes made, and come to it like a merchant already in a good way of business— "

This last piece of kindness touched Popinot so much that he grasped César's large hand in his and kissed it. The good man's confidence had flattered the lover, and a man in love is capable of anything.

"Poor fellow!" said Birotteau, as he watched his assistant hurrying across the gardens of the Tuileries, "if Césarine only cared about him! But he limps, his hair is the color of a basin, and girls are such queer things! I can scarcely be-

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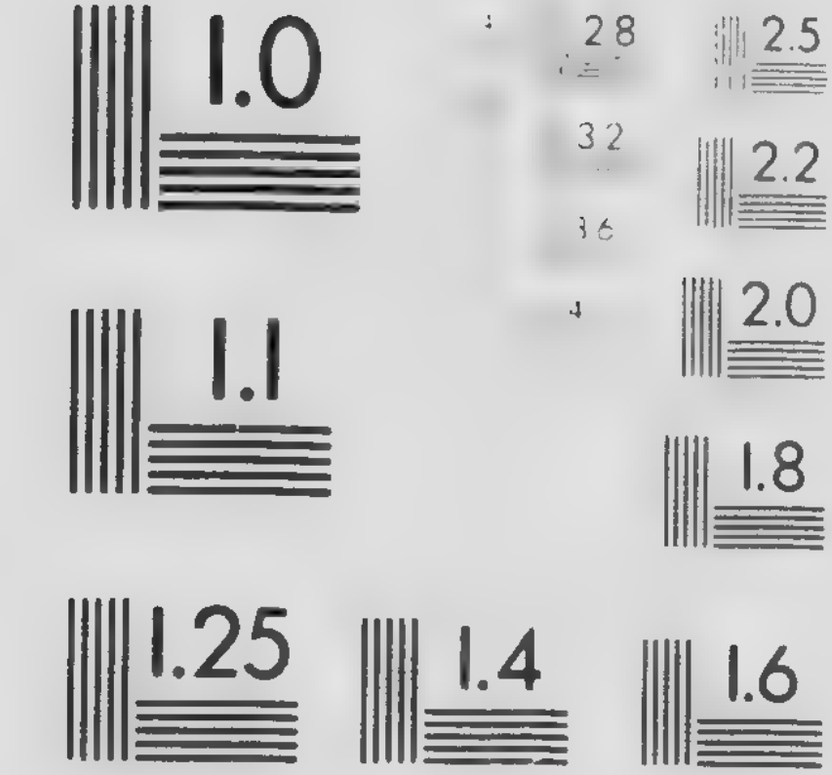

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lieve that Césarine . . . And then her mother would like to see her a notary's wife. Alexandre Crottat would make her a rich woman; money makes anything endurable, w[illegible] there is no happiness that will stand the test of poverty. After all, I have made up my mind that my girl shall be mistress of herself, so that she stops short of folly."

Birotteau's next-door neighbor, Cayron by name, was a dealer in umbrellas, sunshades, and walking sticks. He came from Languedoc, his business was not doing well, and César had helped him several times. Cayron asked nothing better than to contract his limits, and to effect a proportionate saving in house rent by giving up two first-floor rooms to the wealthy perfumer.

"Well, neighbor," said Birotteau familiarly as he entered the umbrella shop, "my wife consents to the enlargement of our place. If you like, we will go round and see M. Molineux at eleven o'clock."

"My dear M. Birotteau," returned he of the umbrella shop, "I have never asked anything for the concession on my part, but you know that a good man of business ought to turn everything to money."

"The deuce!" cried the perfumer; "I have no money to throw away, and I am waiting to know if my architect thinks the thing feasible. 'Before you settle anything,' so he said, 'we must know whether the floors are on a level; and then we must have M. Molineux's leave to make an opening in the wall, and is it a party wall?' And after that I shall have to turn the staircase in my house, so as to alter the landing and have the whole place level from end to end. There will be a lot of expense, and I don't want to ruin myself."

"Ah, sir," cried the Languedocien, "when *you* are ruined, heaven and earth will come together and have a family."

Birotteau stroked his chin, raised himself on tiptoe, and came down again.

"Besides," Cayron went on, "I only ask you to take this paper of me——" and he held out a little statement for five thousand francs and sixteen bills.

"Ah!" said the perfumer, turning them over, "all for small amounts, at two months and three months——"

"Take them of me, and don't charge me more than six per cent," pleaded the umbrella dealer humbly.

"Am I a Jew?" asked the perfumer reproachfully.

"Goodness, sir, I took them to du Tillet that used to be our assistant, and he would not have them at any price; he wanted to know how much I would consent to lose, no [illegible]."

"I know none of these signatures," said the perfumer.

"Well, we have funny names in the cane and umbrella trade; they are hawkers."

"Well, well; I do not say that I will take the lot, but I might manage to take all at the shortest dates."

"Don't leave me to run after those horse-leeches that drain us of the best part of the profits, for a thousand francs at four months; take the lot, sir! I do so little discounting, that no one gives me credit; that is the death of us poor retailers in a small way."

"Well, well, I will take your little bills. Céleste shall settle it with you. Be ready at eleven.—Here comes my architect, M. Grindot," added the perfumer, as he saw the young man whom he had met by appointment at M. de la Billardière's house on the previous evening.—"Unlike most men of talent, you are punctual, sir," said César, in his most genteel manner.

"If punctuality—in the phrase of a king who was a clever man as well as a great statesman—is the courtesy of kings, it is no less the fortune of architects. Time—time is money; most of all for you artists. Architecture combines all the other arts, I permit myself to say. We will not go through the shop," he added, as he showed the way to the sham carriage entrance.

Four years ago M. Grindot had taken the *Grand Prix d'Architecture;* and now, he had just returned from a three years' sojourn in Rome at the expense of the State. While he was in Italy the young artist had thought of his art; in

Paris he turned his attention to money-making. Governments alone can give the necessary millions to erect public buildings and monuments to an architect's enduring fame; and it is so natural, when fresh from Rome, to take one's self for a Fontaine or a Percier, that every ambitious young architect has a leaning towards Ministerialism; so the subsidized Liberal, metamorphosed into a Royalist, sought to find patrons in power; and when a *Grand Prix* conducts himself after this fashion, his comrades call him a sycophant.

Two courses lay open to the youthful architect—he might serve the perfumer or make as much as he could out of him. But Birotteau the deputy-mayor; Birotteau, the future possessor of half that building estate near the Madeleine, where a quarter full of handsome houses was sure to be built sooner or later, was a man worth humoring, so Grindot sacrificed present gain to future opportunities. Patiently he listened to the plans, ideas, and vain repetitions of this shopkeeping Philistine, the artist's butt and laughing-stock, and the particular object of his scorn, and followed the perfumer about his house, bowing respectfully to his ideas. When Birotteau had said all that he had to say, the young architect tried to give a summary of his own views.

"You have three windows looking out upon the street in your own house," he said, "as well as the window that is wasted on the stairs and required for the landing. To these four windows you add two on the same floor in the next house, by turning the staircase so that you can walk on level from one end to the other on the side nearest the street."

"You have understood me exactly," said the amazed perfumer.

"To carry out your plan, we shall have to light the new staircase from above, and contrive a porter's lodge in the plinth."

"Plinth?"

"Yes: the part of the wall under the——"

"I see, sir."

"As to your rooms, and their arrangement, and decoration,

give me *carte-blanche.* I should like to make them worthy——"

"Worthy! You have said the very word, sir."

"How long can you give me to carry out this scheme of decoration?"

"Twenty days."

"What are you prepared to put down for the workmen?"

"Well, what are the repairs likely to mount up to?"

"An architect can estimate the cost of a new building almost to a centime," said the other; "but as I have not undertaken a *bourgeois* job as yet (pardon me, sir, the word slipped out), I ought to tell you beforehand that it is impossible for me to give estimates for alterations and repairs. In a week's time I might be able to make a rough guess. Put your confidence in me; you shall have a charming staircase lighted from above, and a pretty vestibule, and in the plinth——"

"The plinth again!"

"Do not be anxious. I will find room for a little porter's lodge. The alteration and decoration of your rooms will be a labor of love. Yes, sir, I am thinking of art and not of making money. Above all things, if I am to succeed, I must be talked about, must I not? So, in my opinion, the best way is not to haggle with tradesmen, but to obtain a good effect cheaply."

"With such ideas, young man," Birotteau said patronizingly, "you will succeed."

"So you will yourself arrange with the bricklayers, painters, locksmiths, carpenters, and cabinet-makers; and I, for my part, undertake to check their accounts. You will simply agree to pay me a fee of two thousand francs; it will be money well laid out. Put the whole place into my hands by twelve o'clock to-morrow, and tell me whom you mean to employ."

"What is it likely to cost at first sight?" asked Birotteau.

"Ten to twelve thousand francs," said Grindot, "without counting the furniture; for, of course, you will refurnish the rooms. Will you give me the address of your carpet manufacturer? I ought to come to an understanding with him about the colors, so as to insure harmonious unity."

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"M. Braschon in the Rue Saint-Antoine has my order," said the perfumer, assuming a ducal air.

The architect made a note of the address on one of those little tablets which are unmistakably a pretty woman's gift.

"Well," said Birotteau. "I leave it all to you, sir. Still, wait until I have arranged to take over the lease of the two rooms next door, and obtained permission to make an opening through the wall."

"Send me a note this evening," said the architect. "I must spend the night in drawing plans. We architects would rather work for a city merchant than for the King of Prussia, that is to say, as far as our own taste is concerned. In any case, I will set about taking measurements, the height of the rooms, the dimensions of the door and window embrasures, and the size of the windows."

"It must be finished by the date I have given, or it is no good."

"It certainly must," returned the architect. "The men shall work day and night, and we will employ processes for drying the paint; but do not let the builders swindle you, make them quote beforehand, and have the agreement in writing."

"Paris is the only place in the world where one can make such strokes of the wand," said Birotteau, indulging in a flourish worthy of some Asiatic potentate in the *Arabian Nights*.—"Do me the honor of coming to my ball, sir. All men of talent do not feel the contempt for trade which some heap upon it; and I expect you will meet one scientific man of the highest rank—M. Vauquelin of the Institute!—besides M. de la Billardière, M. le Comte de Fontaine, M. Lebas a judge, and President of the Tribunal of Commerce; and several magistrates, M. le Comte de Granville of the Court Royal, and M. Popinot of the Court of First Instance, M. Camusot of the Tribunal of Commerce, and his father-in-law M. Cardot. . . . Perhaps, even M. le Duc de Lenoncourt, first Gentleman of the Bedchamber. It is a gathering of my friends, quite as much in honor of—er—the liberation

of the soil—as to celebrate my—promotion to the Order of the Legion of Honor."

Grindot's gesture was peculiar.

"Possibly—I have deserved this—signal mark of royal—favor by the discharge of my functions at the Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for the Bourbons on the steps of Saint-Roch's Church on the 13th Vendémiaire, when I was wounded by Napoleon. These claims to——"

Constance, in morning dress, came out of Césarine's bedroom, where she had been dressing; her first glance stopped her husband's fervid eloquence; he cast about for some everyday phrase which should modestly convey the tidings of the glory awaiting him on the morrow.

"Here, *mimi,* this is M. *de* Grindot, a distinguished young man of great talent.—This gentleman is the architect whom M. de la Billardière recommended; he will superintend our little alterations here."

The perfumer placed himself so that his wife could not see him, and put his finger on his lips as he uttered the word *little.* The architect understood.

"Constance, this gentleman will take the dimensions of the rooms.—Let him do it, dear," said Birotteau, and he whisked out into the street.

"Will it cost a great deal?" Constance asked the architect.

"No, madame; six thousand francs, roughly speaking——"

"Roughly speaking!" cried Mme. Birotteau. "Sir, I beg of you not to begin without an estimate, and to do nothing until a contract has been signed. I know the way of those gentlemen the builders—six thousand means twenty thousand. We are not in a position to squander money. I beg of you, sir, although my husband is certainly master in his own house, to leave him time to think this over."

"Monsieur told me, madame, that he must have the rooms finished in twenty days; if we make a delay, you may incur the expense without obtaining the result."

"There is expense and expense," said the fair mistress of the *Queen of Roses.*

"Eh! madame; is it so very glorious, do you think, for an architect who would like to erect public monuments to superintend alterations in a private house? I only undertook the little commission to oblige M. de la Billardière, and if you are alarmed——"

He made as if he would withdraw.

"Well, well, sir," said Constance, going back to her room. Once there she hid her head on her daughter's shoulder.—"My child," she cried, "your father is ruining himself! He has engaged an architect who wears moustaches and a *royale* on his chin, and talks about erecting public monuments! He will fling the house out of the windows to build us a Louvre. César is always in a hurry when there is anything crazy to be done; he only told me about the plan last night, and he is setting about it this morning."

"Bah! mamma, never mind papa; Providence has always taken care of you," said Césarine, putting her arms about her mother. Then she went to the piano, to show the architect that a perfumer's daughter was no stranger to the fine arts.

When the architect came into the room, he was surprised by Césarine's beauty, and stood almost dumfounded. For the artist saw before him Césarine just come from her little room, in her loose morning-gown, fresh and blooming with the freshness and the bloom of eighteen years, blue-eyed, and slender, and fair-haired. Youth gave the elasticity (so rare in Paris) which lends firmness to the most delicate tissues; youth tinted the blue network of veins throbbing beneath the transparent skin with the color adored by painters. For though she lived in the relaxing atmosphere of a Parisian shop, where the fresh air can scarcely penetrate, and the sunlight seldom comes, the outdoor life of Roman Trasteverine could not have been a more successful beautifier than Césarine's manner of living. Her thick hair grew erect like her father's, and being dressed high, afforded a view of a well-set neck among a shower of curls—the elaborate coiffure of the damsels of the counter, in whom a desire to shine inspires a more than English attention to trifling details in matters of the toilette.

Césarine's beauty was neither that of an English court lady nor of a French duchess, but the plump and auburn-haired comeliness of Rubens' Flemish women. She had inherited her father's turned-up nose, but its delicacy of outline gave a sprightly charm to a face, of the essentially French type so well rendered by Largillière. The rich silken tissue of the skin indicated the abundant vitality of girlhood. Her mother's broad brow was lighted by a girlish serenity, untroubled by care, and there was a tender grace in the expression of the blue liquid eyes of the happy-hearted, fair-haired maid. If happiness had taken from her face the romantic interest which painters inevitably give to their compositions by an expression somewhat too pensive, the vague, wistful instincts of the young girl who has never left her mother's wing made an approach to this ideal. With all her apparent slenderness, she was strongly made. Her feet indicated her father's peasant origin, a racial defect, like the redness of her hands—the sign-manual of a purely bourgeois descent. Sooner or later she was sure to grow stout. Occasionally young and fashionable women had come within her ken; and in course of time she had acquired from them the instinct of dress, certain ways of carrying her head, and manners of speaking and moving, thus copied, which turned the heads of the assistants and other young men; in their eyes she seemed to have a distinguished air.

Popinot had vowed to himself that no woman but Césarine should be his wife. This mobile blonde, whom a glance seemed to read, who seemed ready to melt into tears at a harsh word, was the one woman in whose presence he could feel conscious of masculine superiority. The charming girl inspired love, without leaving time to consider whether or no she had sufficient *ésprit* to ensure that the love should be lasting; but what need is there for what we in Paris call *ésprit*, in a class where the essential elements of happiness are good sense and virtue?

In character, Césarine was a second edition of her mother, slightly improved by an education which had taught her

superfluous accomplishments. She was fond of music, and had made a crayon drawing of the *Madonna of the Chair;* she perused the works of Mesdames Cottin and Riccoboni, and the writings of Fénelon, Racine, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. She never appeared at her mother's side at the cash-desk save for a few moments before dinner, or when, on rare occasions, she took her place. Her father and mother, like all self-made people, who hasten to plant the seeds of ingratitude in their children by putting the younger generation on a higher level, delighted to make an idol of Césarine, who, happily, possessed the good qualities of her class, and did not take advantage of their weakness.

Mme. Birotteau followed the architect's movements with earnest, anxious eyes; looking on in consternation, calling her daughter's attention to the strange gyrations of the footrule, as Grindot took his measurements after the manner of architects and builders. For her, each one of those strokes of the wand seemed to lay the place under an evil enchantment, and boded ill to the house; she would fain have had the walls less lofty and the rooms smaller, and dared not put any questions to the young man as to the results of this sorcery.

"Be easy, madame," he said, with a smile; "I shall not carry anything away."

Césarine could not help laughing.

"Sir," pleaded Constance, who did not so much as notice the architect's quip, "aim at economy; some day we may be able to make you a return——"

Before César went to M. Molineux, the landlord of the next house, he asked Roguin for the transfer of the lease which Alexandre Crottat was to have drawn up. As he came away from the notary's house, he saw du Tillet at Roguin's study window. Although the *liaison* between his sometime assistant and Mme. Roguin was a sufficient explanation of du Tillet's presence in the house at a time when the negotiations for the building land were impending, Birotteau, trustful though he was, felt uncomfortable. Du Tillet's animated face suggested that a discussion was going on.

"Suppose that he should be in the business?" he asked himself, in an access of his commercial prudence.

The suspicion flashed like lightning across his mind. He turned again and saw Mme. Roguin at the window; and then the banker's presence no longer looked so suspicious.

"Still, how if Constance was right?" he asked himself. "How stupid I am to pay any attention to a woman's notions! However, I will talk it over this morning with our uncle. It is only a step from the Cour Batave, where M. Molineux lives, to the Rue des Bourdonnais."

A suspicious onlooker, a man of business with some experience of rogues, would have been warned; but Birotteau's previous career, together with his lack of mental grasp (for he was but little fitted for retracing a chain of inductions, a process by which an able man arrives at a cause), all led to his ruin. He found the umbrella dealer dressed in his best, and was starting away with him to the landlord, when Virginie, the servant, caught her master by the arm.

"The mistress hopes you will not go out again, sir——"

"Come!" cried Birotteau; "some more women's notions!"

"Without taking your cup of coffee. It is ready for you."

"Oh! all right. I have so many things in my head, neighbor," said Birotteau, turning to Cayron, "that I do not listen to my stomach. Be so good as to walk on; we shall meet each other at M. Molineux's door, unless you go up and explain the matter to him first. We should save time that way."

M. Molineux was an eccentric person of independent means, a specimen of a kind of humanity which you will no more find out of Paris than you will find Iceland moss growing anywhere out of Iceland. The comparison is but so much the more apt, for that the man in question belonged to that doubtful borderland between the animal and vegetable kingdoms which awaits the Mercier, who shall classify the various *cryptogamia* which strike root, thrive, or die among the plaster walls of the strange unwholesome old houses affected by the species.

This particular human plant was an umbellifer, to judge

by the blue tubular cap which crowned a stem sheathed in a pair of greenish-colored breeches, and terminated by bulbous roots enveloped in list slippers. At first sight the plant seems harmless and colorless enough: there is certainly nothing to suggest poison in its appearance. In this strange freak of nature you would have recognized the typical shareholder, who believes in all the news which the daily press baptizes with printer's ink, whose "Look at the paper" is a final appeal to authority; this (you would have thought) was the bourgeois, essentially a lover of order, always (in theory) in rebellion against the powers that be, to whom in practice he punctually yields obedience; a ferocious creature, take him singly, who grows tame in a crowd of his like. The man who is obdurate as a bailiff where his dues are concerned, gives fresh groundsel to his birds, and saves the fish-bones for the cat; he looks up in the middle of making out a receipt to whistle to the canary; he is suspicious as a turnkey, but will hurry to invest his money in some doubtful undertaking, and then try to recover his losses by the most sordid meanness. The noxious qualities of this hybrid growth are only discovered by use; its nauseous bitterness requires the coction of some piece of business wherein its interests are mingled with those of men.

Like all Parisians, Molineux felt a need to make his power felt. He craved that particular privilege of a sovereignty more or less exercised by every creature, down to the very porter, over a larger or smaller number of victims—a woman, a child, a clerk, or lodger, a horse, a dog, or monkey—that part of domination which consists in handing on to another the mortifications received by an aspirant to higher spheres. The tiresome little old person in question, having neither wife, nor child, nor niece, nor nephew, treated his charwoman so harshly that she gave him no opportunity of venting his spleen upon her, and avoided all collision with him by a rigorous discharge of her duties.

So his appetite for domestic tyranny being thus balked, he was fain to find other ways of satisfying it. He had made

patient study of the law of landlord and tenant, and of the legal aspects of the party-wall; he had fathomed the mysteries of jurisprudence with regard to house-property in Paris, and was learned in its infinitely minute intricacies with regard to boundaries and abutments, easements, rates, charges, regulations for the cleansing of the street, hangings for Fête-Dieu processions, waste-pipes, lights, projections over the public way, and the near proximity of insanitary dwellings. All his mental and physical energies, all his intelligence was devoted to maintaining his authority as a landlord with a high hand; he had made a hobby of his occupation, and the hobby was becoming a mania.

He loved to protect citizens against encroachments on their rights, but opportunities occurred so seldom that his thwarted passion expended itself upon his tenants. A tenant became his enemy, his inferior, his subject, his vassal. He felt that their homage was a due, and regarded those who passed him without a salutation on the stairs as boors. He made out his receipts himself, and sent them at noon on the quarter day; and those who were behindhand received a summons by a certain hour. Then followed a distraint and costs, and all the cavalry of the law came into the field with the celerity of "the machine," as the headsman calls his instrument of execution. Molineux gave no grace and no delay; his heart was indurated on the side of rents.

"I will lend you the money if you want it," he would say to a solvent tenant, "but pay me my rent; any getting behindhand with the rent means a loss of interest for which the law provides no remedy."

After a prolonged study of the skittish humors of successive tenants who conformed to no standard and, like successive dynasties, nor more nor less, invariably overturned the institutions of their predecessors, Molineux had promulgated a charter, which he observed religiously. By virtue of it, the good man never did any repairs; none of his chimneys smoked, his staircases were always in order, his ceilings white, his cornices above reproach, his floors held securely to the

joists, and there was no fault to find with the paint. All the locks had been put in within the last three years, every window pane was whole, and as for cracks in the walls, they did not exist; he could see no broken tiles in the floors till the tenants were leaving the house. He usually appeared upon the scene to receive the incoming tenants with a locksmith and a painter and glazier, very handy fellows, he said. The tenant was doubtless at liberty to make improvements; but if the thriftless creature redecorated his rooms, old Molineux set his wits to work, and pondered night and day how to dislodge him and let the newly papered and painted abode to another comer. He set his snares, bided his time, and began the whole series of his unhallowed devices. There was no subtlety in the regulations of Paris with regard to leases that he did not know. He indited polite and amiable communications to his victims; but beneath the manner, as beneath the harmless and obliging expression of the pettifogging scribbler himself, lurked the spirit of a Shylock.

He must always be paid six months in advance, to be deducted from the last half-year's rent, subject to a host of thorny conditions of his own invention. He assured himself that the value of the tenant's furniture was sufficient to cover the rent, and reconnoitered every new tenant like a detective when he came in. There were some occupations which he did not like, and the least sound of a hammer frightened him. When the time came for handing over a lease, he kept it back for a week, conning it over for fear it should contain what he denominated *notary's et ceteras*.

Apart from his character of landlord, Jean-Baptiste Molineux was apparently good-natured and obliging. He could play a game of boston without complaining of being badly seconded by his partner; his stock subjects for conversation were of the ordinary bourgeois kind, and he found the same things laughable—the arbitrary acts of bakers (the rascals), who give short weights, which are winked at by the police, the heroic seventeen deputies of the Left. He read the Curé Meslier's *Bon Sens*, yet went to mass, halting

between Deism and Christianity; but he subscribed nothing for sacramental bread, under the plea that you must resist the encroachments of the priesthood. The indefatigable redresser of grievances would write to this effect to the newspapers, though the newspapers neither inserted his letters nor replied to them. Molineux was, in short, in many respects the ordinary estimable citizen who burns a yule log at Christmas, draws for king on Twelfth Night, plays tricks on the 1st of April, makes the round of the boulevards when the weather is fine, goes to watch the skating; and on days when there are to be fireworks in the Place Louis XV., will take his place there at two o'clock in the afternoon with a piece of bread in his pocket, so as to be "in the front row."

The Cour Batave, where the little old man lived, is a result of one of those freaks of the speculative builder which cannot be explained after they have taken substantial form. It is a cloister-like building with its freestone arcading, its covered galleries surrounding the court with a fountain in the middle—a thirsty fountain with its lion jaws agape, not to supply, but to ask for water of every passer-by. Possibly it was intended for a sort of Palais-Royal to adorn the Faubourg Saint-Denis. There is a little light and stir of life during the day in the unwholesome pile shut in on all four sides by tall houses; it lies in the centre of a labyrinth of dank alleys, where the rheumatism lurks for the hurrying foot-passenger, a maze of dark narrow passages which converge here and connect the Quartier des Halles and the Quartier Saint-Martin by the famous Rue Quincampoix; but at night there is no spot in Paris more deserted, and these little slums might be called the catacombs of commerce. It is the sink of several industries; and if there are few natives of Batavia proper, there are plenty of small tradesmen.

Naturally, all the suites of rooms in this merchant's palace have but one outlook—into the central courtyard—and for this and other reasons the rents asked are of the lowest. M. Molineux inhabited one of the angles of the building. Con-

siderations of health had prompted the choice of a sixth-floor lodging; for fresh air was only to be had at a height of seventy feet from the ground. From the leads, where the worthy owner of house-property was wont to take exercise, he enjoyed a charming view of the windmills of Montmartre. He grew flowers up there too, in defiance of police regulations against these hanging-gardens of the modern Babylon. His sixth floor establishment consisted of four rooms, without counting the water-closets on the floor above, a valuable property to which his claim was incontestable; he had the key, he had established them. On a first entrance, an indecent bareness at once revealed the miserly nature of the man. Half-a-dozen straw-bottomed chairs stood in the lobby; there was a glazed earthenware stove; and on the walls, covered with a bottle-green paper, hung four prints bought at sales. In the dining-room you beheld a couple of sideboards, two cages full of birds, a table covered with oilcloth, a weather-glass, mahogany chairs with horsehair cushions, and through a French window a view of the aforesaid hanging-gardens. Short, antiquated green silk curtains adorned the sitting-room, and the white painted wooden furniture was upholstered in green Utrecht velvet. As for the furniture of the old bachelor's room, it was of the period of Louis XV.; disfigured by prolonged wear, and so dirty that a woman in a white gown would have shrunk from contact with it. The chimney-piece boasted a clock; the dial, between two columns, served as a pediment beneath a statuette of Pallas brandishing a lance—a fabulous personage of antiquity. The tiled floor was so littered over with plates full of scraps for the cats, that it was scarcely possible to move about without setting a foot in one of them. Above the rosewood chest of drawers hung a pastel—Molineux in his youth. Add a few books, tables covered with shabby green card-board boxes, a case full of the stuffed forms of some departed canaries on a console table, and, to complete the list, a bed so chilly-looking that it might have been a rebuke to a Carmelite.

César Birotteau was charmed with Molineux's exquisite

politeness. He found the latter in his gray flannel dressing-gown, keeping an eye on the milk set on a little cast-iron plate warmer, in a corner of the hearth, while he poured the contents of a brown earthen pipkin, in which he had been boiling coffee grounds, into his *cafétière* by spoonfuls at a time. The umbrella dealer had opened the door, lest his landlord should be disturbed in this occupation; but Molineux, holding mayors and deputy-mayors ("our municipal officers," as he called them) in great veneration, rose at first sight of the magistrate, and stood cap in hand until the great Birotteau should be seated.

"No, sir . . . Yes, sir . . . Ah, sir, if I had known that I was to have the honor of housing a member of the municipal government of Paris amid my humble Penates, pray believe that I should have made it my business to repair to your house; although I am your landlord, or—on the point of—being——"

Here Birotteau by a gesture entreated him to put on his cap.

"I shall do nothing of the kind; I shall remain bareheaded until you are seated, and have put on your hat if you have a cold. My room is rather chilly; my narrow means do not permit—God bless you, Mr. Deputy-mayor!"

Birotteau had sneezed while fumbling for his papers. He held them out, not without remarking that to save any delay he had had them made out at his own expense by M. Roguin his notary.

"I do not call M. Roguin's knowledge in question; 'tis an old name, well known in the Parisian notariat; but I have my little ways of doing things, and I look after my affairs myself, a hobby excusable enough; and my notary is——"

"But this is such a simple matter," said the perfumer, accustomed to prompt decisions on the part of buyers and others.

"*Simple!*" echoed Molineux. "Nothing is simple where house property is concerned. Ah! you are not a landlord, sir, so much the happier you! If you but knew the lengths

to which a tenant will push ingratitude, and what precautions we have to take! Now just listen to this, sir: I have a tenant——" and for fifteen minutes Molineux held forth, relating how that M. Gendrin, a draughtsman, had eluded the vigilance of the caretaker in the Rue Saint-Honoré. M. Gendrin had perpetrated scandals worthy of a Marat, obscene drawings! and the police tolerated it, nay, they were made with the connivance of the police! Then this Gendrin, an artist of thoroughly immoral character, had gone back to the house with loose women, and made it impossible to go up and down the stairs, a prank worthy of a man who drew caricatures to ridicule the Government. And why all these misdeeds? . . . Because he was asked to pay his rent on the 15th! Gendrin and Molineux were about to go to law about it; for while the artist did not pay, he insisted on occupying the empty rooms. Molineux received anonymous letters—from Gendrin no doubt—threatening to murder him some night in the alleys about the Cour Batave.

"Things have arrived at such a pitch, sir," he went on, "that the Prefect of Police, to whom in confidence I related my difficulty (at the same time, I took the opportunity of saying a word or two touching the alterations that ought to be made in the provisions of the law for such cases), gave me an authorization to carry firearms in self-defence."

The little old man got up to look for his pistols.

"Here they are, sir!" cried he.

"But you have nothing of that kind to fear from me, sir," said Birotteau, glancing at Cayron with a smile that plainly expressed his pity for such a man.

Molineux caught the glance, and was shocked to see such a look on the countenance of a "municipal officer," whose duty it was to see to the safety of those in his district. He could have forgiven it in anybody else, but in Birotteau it was unpardonable.

"Sir," Molineux answered dryly, "one of the most highly respected judges in the Consular Tribune, a deputy-mayor, and an honorable merchant, would not condescend to such

baseness, for baseness it is! But in this particular case you want the consent of your landlord, M. le Comte de Granville, before you make a hole in the wall, and stipulations must be made in the agreement touching the restoration of the wall on the expiration of the lease. As a matter of fact, too, the rent is a great deal lower than it will be; rents will go up all about the Place Vendôme; they are going up already! The Rue Castiglione is about to be built. I am binding myself down—I am binding—myself——"

"Let us have done with it," said Birotteau. "What do you want? I have had enough experience of business to guess that your reasonings can be silenced by the great argument—money! Well, how much do you want?"

"Nothing but what is fair, sir. How long has your lease to run?"

"Seven years," answered Birotteau.

"What may not my first floor be worth in seven years' time?" cried Molineux. "What will two furnished rooms let for over in your quarter? More than two hundred francs a month very likely! I am binding myself; binding myself down by a lease. So we will set down the rent at fifteen hundred francs. At that figure I will consent to receive you as a tenant for the two rooms instead of M. Cayron here," giving the dealer a sly wink, "and let you have them on lease for seven consecutive years. The opening in the wall you will make at your own charges, subject to your bringing to me proof that M. le Comte de Granville sanctions it and waives all his rights in the matter. Whatever happens in consequence of the small opening, the responsibility will rest upon you; but you shall be in nowise bound to reinstate the wall so far as I am concerned; you shall pay me down five hundred francs now instead; we never can tell what may happen; and I don't want to run about after anybody to put up my wall again for me."

"The conditions seem to me scarcely fair," put in Birotteau.

"Then you must pay me down seven hundred and fifty

francs *hic et nunc*, to be carried forward till the last six months of possession; the lease will be a sufficient discharge. Oh! I will take bills of exchange for value received in rent, at any date you please, so that I have my guarantee. I am a plain-dealing man, and go straight to the point in business. We will stipulate that you shall wall up the door on my staircase, where you have no right of way . . . at your own expense . . . in brick and mortar. Reassure yourself, I shall not call upon you to make it good when the lease expires; I shall regard the five hundred francs as an indemnity. You will always find me reasonable, sir."

"We in business are not so particular," said the perfumer; "if we had all these formalities, we should do no business at all."

"Oh, in business, that is quite another thing, especially in the perfumery line, where everything slips off and on like a glove," said the little old man, with a sour smile. "But with house property in Paris, sir, you cannot be too particular. Why, I had a tenant in the Rue Montorgueil——"

"I should be very sorry to delay your breakfast, sir," said Birotteau; "here are the deeds, set them right, all that you ask me is agreed to; let us sign the documents to-morrow, and give our promises by word of mouth to-day, for to-morrow my architect must be put in possession of the place."

Molineux looked again at the umbrella-dealer. "There is part of the term expired, sir; M. Cayron has no mind to pay for it; we will add the amount to the little bills, so that the agreement will run from January to January. That will be more business-like."

"So be it," said Birotteau.

"There is the halfpenny in the shilling for the porter——"

"Why, you are not allowing me to use the staircase and the doorway; it is not right that——"

"Oh! but you are a tenant!" cried little Molineux in peremptory tones, up in arms for the principle involved. "You must pay door and window taxes and your share of the rates. If once we clearly understand each other, sir, there

will be no difficulties hereafter.—Is your business rapidly increasing, sir; are you doing well?"

"Yes," said Birotteau, "but that is not my reason. I am inviting a few of my friends, partly to celebrate the evacuation of the foreign troops, partly on the occasion of my own promotion to the Legion of Honor——"

"Aha!" cried Molineux, "a well-deserved honor."

"Yes," said Birotteau. "It may be that I have shown myself not unworthy of this signal mark of royal favor by acting in my capacity at the Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for the Bourbons on the steps of Saint-Roch, on the 13th of Vendémiaire, where I was wounded by Napoleon; these claims——"

"Equal those of our heroes in the late army. The ribbon is red, because it has been dyed in blood shed for France."

At these words, a quotation from the *Constitutionnel,* Birotteau could not resist the impulse to invite little Molineux, who grew quite incoherent in his thanks, and was almost ready to forgive the slight which had been put upon him. The old man went as far as the stairhead with his new tenant, overwhelming him with civilities.

As soon as they were outside in the Cour Batave, Birotteau looked at Cayron with an amused expression.

"I did not think that there was such a weak-minded creature in existence," he said; "idiot" had been on the tip of his tongue, but he suppressed it in time.

"Ah, sir!" said Cayron, "everybody is not as clever as you are."

Birotteau might be excused for thinking himself a clever man compared with Molineux; the umbrella-dealer's reply drew a pleasant smile from him; he took leave of his companion with a regal air.

"Here am I at the Market," he said to himself; "let us arrange about the hazel-nuts."

After an hour spent in making inquiries, the market-woman referred Birotteau to the Rue des Lombards, the headquarters of the trade in nuts for confectionery, and

there his friends the Matifats informed him that the only wholesale dealer in hazel-nuts was one Mme. Angélique Madou, resident in the Rue Perrin-Gasselin; and that this was the one house in the trade for genuine Provençal filberts and white Alpine hazel-nuts.

The Rue Perrin-Gasselin lies in a quadrangle bounded by the Quay, the Rue Saint-Denis, the Rue de la Ferronnerie, and the Rue de la Monnaie, a labyrinth of slums which are, as it were, the entrails of Paris. Here countless numbers of heterogeneous and nondescript industries are carried on; evil-smelling trades, and the manufacture of the daintiest finery, herrings and lawn, silk and honey, butter and tulle, jostle each other in its squalid precincts. Here are the head-quarters of those multitudinous small trades which Paris no more suspects in its midst than a man surmises the functions performed by the pancreas in the human economy. In this congested district, in which one Bidault of the Rue Grenétat (otherwise known as Gigonnet the pawnbroker) played the part of leech, the whole stock of goods sold in the Great Market is kept. The ancient mews are warehouses where tons of oil are stored; the old coach-houses hold thousands of pairs of cotton stockings.

Mme. Madou, sometime a fish-wife, had gone into the "dry-fruit line" some ten years before this present year of grace, on her entrance into a partnership with the late owner of the business, who had an old-established connection among the ladies of the Great Market. Her beauty, of a vigorous and provocative order, had disappeared in excessive stoutness. She lived on the ground floor of a yellow dilapidated house, held together by iron cramps at every story. The departed dealer in dry fruit had succeeded in ridding himself of competitors, and had secured a monopoly of the trade; so that in spite of some slight defects of education, his successor could continue in the same groove, and came and went in her warehouses, old out-buildings, stables, and workshops, where she waged war against insect life with some success.

Mme. Angélique Madou dispensed with counting-house,

safe, and book-keeping (for she could neither read nor write), and answered a letter by blows of the fist, for she looked upon it as an insult. In other respects she was a good-natured soul, with a high-colored countenance, and a bandana handkerchief tied about her head beneath her cap, and a trumpet voice which won the respect of the carmen who brought goods to the Rue Perrin-Gasselin, and whose "rows" with her usually ended in a bottle of *petit blanc*. She could not well have any trouble with the growers who supplied her, for she always paid cash on delivery, the only way of carrying on such a business as hers, and Mother Madou went into the country to see them in the summer-time.

Birotteau found this shrewish saleswoman among her sacks of hazel-nuts, chestnuts, and walnuts.

"Good day, my dear lady," said Birotteau flippantly.

"*You dear!*" returned she. "So you have pleasant recollections of your dealings with me, have you? Have we met each other at Court?"

"I am a perfumer, and what is more, deputy-mayor of the Second Arrondissement of Paris, and I have a right to expect a different tone from you."

"I marry when I have a mind," said the virago; "I am no customer at the mayor's office, and don't trouble deputy-mayors much. And as for my customers, they adore me, and I talk to 'em as I please. If they don't like it, they may take themselves somewhere else."

"See what comes of a monopoly," muttered Birotteau.

"Popole? that's my godson; he has been up to some foolery perhaps: have you come for him, your worship?" she asked, in milder tones.

"No. I have the honor to inform you that I come to you as a customer."

"All right. What is your name, my lad? I haven't seen you here before."

"If that is the way you talk, you ought to sell your nuts in a cap," said Birotteau, and he mentioned his name and destination.

"Oh! you are the famous Birotteau with the handsome wife. Well, and what weight do you want of these little dears of hazel-nuts, honey?"

"Six thousand pounds weight."

"It is as much as I have," said the saleswoman, with a voice like a cracked flute. "You are not in the do-nothing line, marrying the girls, and making scent for them. Lord, bless you! you do a trade, you do! Sorry I have so little for you! You will be a fine customer, and your name will be written on the heart of the woman that I love best in the world——"

"Who may that be?"

"Who but dear Madame Madou."

"What do you want for the nuts?"

"Twenty-five francs the hundred-weight to you, mister, if you take the lot."

"Twenty-five francs," said Birotteau. "That is fifteen hundred francs! And I shall very likely take a hundred thousand pounds weight in a year!"

"But just look at the quality; no husks!" cried she, plunging a red arm into a sack of filberts. "Sound kernels, my dear sir. Just think, now, the grocers sell their mixed dessert fruits at twenty-four sous the pound, and in every four pounds they put more than a pound of hazel-nuts. Am I to lose money on the goods to please you? You are a nice man, but I don't care enough about you yet to do that. As you are taking such a quantity, we might let you have them at twenty francs, for it won't do to send away a deputy-mayor; it would bring bad luck to the young couples! A good article; just feel the weight of them! They wouldn't go fifty to the pound! Sound nuts they are, not a maggot among them!"

"Well, send six thousand pounds weight early to-morrow morning to my factory in the Rue Faubourg-du-Temple, for two thousand francs at ninety days."

"They shall be punctual as a bride at a wedding. Well, good-bye, M. le Maire; we part good friends. But if it is all the same to you," she added, following Birotteau into the

"Good day, my dear lady," said Birotteau flippantly

court, "I would rather have a bill at forty days, for I have ...u have them too cheap, and I can't afford to lose the ...rest on the money too. For all his sentimental ways, old Gigonnet sucks the life out of us, as a spider sucks a fly."

"Very well, yes, fifty days. But I'll have the nuts by ..., so as not to lose on the hollow ones. They must be ...hed or I'll have nothing to do with them."

"Oh, the fox; he knows that dodge, does he?" said Mme. ...; "you can't catch him napping. Those beggars in the ... des Lombards put him up to that! Those great wolves ...er are all in a league to devour us poor lambs."

The lamb was five feet high and three feet round; she had ... a vestige of a waist, and looked like a post in a striped ...n gown.

As he went along the Rue Saint-Honoré, the perfumer, ...t in his schemes, meditated on his duel with Macassar Oil. He designed the labels, decided on the shape of the bottles, ... quality of the corks, the color of the placards. And people ... that there is no poetry in business! Newton did not make ...re calculations over the discovery of the famous binomial ...orem than Birotteau made for the "Comagen Essence" (... it was an essence now; the words oil and essence pos...d no definite meaning for him, and he went from the one ... the other). All these combinations were seething in his ...nd, and he mistook the ferment of an empty brain for the ...rmination of an idea. So absorbed was he in his medita...s, that he went past the Rue des Bourdonnais, and be...nking himself of his uncle, was obliged to retrace his ...s.

Claude-Joseph Pillerault, formerly a retail ironmonger at ... sign of the *Golden Bell*, was one of those human beings ... exterior is the outward and visible expression of a ...tiful nature; and heart and brain, language and thought, ... manner and the clothes that he wore, were all in harmony. ... was the only relation that Mme. Birotteau had in the ...d, and upon her and on Césarine Pillerault had centered ... his affections; for in the course of his business career

he had lost his wife and his son, and a boy whom he had adopted, the son of his cook.

These cruel bereavements had given to the good man's thoughts a cast of Christian stoicism, a lofty doctrine which was the informing spirit of his life, and shed the radiance of a winter sunset over his last years, a glow that brings no warmth. There was a tinge of asceticism about the thin, worn face, where sallow and swarthy tones were harmoniously blended; you saw in it a striking resemblance to typical presentments of Time; but the every-day cares of a retail business had touched this face, there was less of the monumental quality, less of the grimness insisted upon by painters, sculptors, and designers of bronze figures for clocks.

Pillerault was of middle height, and thick-set rather than stout. Nature had fashioned him for hard work and a long life; he was strongly built, as his square shoulders indicated; a man of phlegmatic temper, whose feelings, though he could feel, did not lie on the surface. His quiet manner and resolute face indicated that he was little given to the expression of his emotions; but reserved and undemonstrative though he was, there were depths of tenderness in Pillerault's nature. The principal characteristic of the hazel eyes, with dark specks in them, was their unvarying clearness. There were deep furrows in a forehead sallowed by time, narrow, contracted, and stern, and covered with gray hair, cut so short that it looked like felt. Prudence, not avarice, was expressed in the lines of the thin lips. The brightness of the eyes told of a temperate life; and, indeed, sincerity, a sense of duty, and a real humility glorified his features and set off his face, as health does.

For sixty years he had led a hard and dreary existence, a constant struggle for a livelihood. It was the same story as César's own, with César's luck omitted. Pillerault had remained an assistant till he was thirty years old; he had embarked his capital in business at an age when César was investing his savings in *rentes;* then the law of the maximum had hit him hard, and his pickaxes and spades had been

requisitioned. His taciturn wisdom, his foresight, and logical clear-headedness had had their effect on his "ways of doing business." His bargains were concluded as a rule by word of mouth and difficulties seldom arose. Like most meditative people, he was an observer; he said little, and studied those who talked; often he had declined good bargains of which his neighbors had availed themselves, and subsequently repented, and vowed that Pillerault could smell out a rogue. He preferred sure gains, if of the smallest, to bold strokes of business involving heavy sums.

His stock of hardware consisted of grates, gridirons, cast-iron fire-dogs, boilers, and copper caldrons, hoes, and such agricultural implements as laborers use, somewhat unremunerative branches of a business that involves continual drudgery. Hardware is ponderous, awkward to handle, and difficult to store, and the profits are not heavy in proportion; so Pillerault had nailed up many a case, sent off many packages, and unloaded many vans. Never had a competence been more honorably earned, more thoroughly deserved, more to the credit of the man who had made it. He had never asked too much, had never run after business. Towards the end of the time, you might have seen him smoking his pipe in the doorway and watching his assistants at work. In 1814, when he retired, his actual capital at first consisted of seventy thousand francs, which he invested in Government stock, that brought him in five thousand and some odd hundred francs a year, with a further forty thousand francs due in five years' time, when the assistant to whom he had sold the business was to pay for it. On this amount, meanwhile, no interest was paid. For thirty years he had annually made seven per cent on a turn-over of a hundred thousand francs, and had lived on half his income. Such was his balance-sheet.

His neighbors, but little jealous of this by no means brilliant success, extolled his wisdom without comprehending it.

At the corner of the Rue de la Monnaie and the Rue Saint-Honoré stands the Café David, where a few retired trades-

men such as Pillerault, congregate of an evening to take their coffee. At one time, Pillerault's adoption of his cook's son had occasioned a few jokes among its frequenters, such jokes as are addressed to a man looked up to among his fellows, for the ironmonger received a respect for which he had not sought; his own self-respect sufficed him. So when Pillerault lost the poor young fellow, there were more than two hundred people at the funeral who followed his adopted child to the grave. He behaved heroically in those days, making no parade of his grief, bearing it as a brave man bears sorrow. This increased the sympathy felt in the quarter for the "good man," as they called him, and the accent in which the words were spoken gave the words a wider and ennobled meaning when they were applied to Pillerault.

Claude Pillerault had become so accustomed to the sober even tenor of his life, that when he retired from business and entered upon the time of leisure, which hangs so heavily on many a Parisian tradesman's hands, he could not unbend and divert himself with the amusements of an idle life; he made no change in his housekeeping; and his old age was enlivened by his political opinions, which, let us admit it at once, were those of the extreme Left.

Pillerault belonged to the artisan class, which the Revolution had brought into co-operation with the small shopkeepers. The one blot on his character was the importance which he attached to the victory of his principles: he dwelt fondly on his rights, on liberty, on the great results of the Revolution; he firmly believed that his political freedom and existence were being undermined by the Jesuits, whose underhand power the Liberals discovered, and threatened by the ideas with which the *Constitutionnel* credited Monsieur the King's brother. He was, however, consistent in his life and in his ideas; there was nothing narrow in his political views; he never abused his adversaries, he held courtiers in suspicion, and believed in Republican virtues. He imagined that Manuel was guiltless of any excesses, that General Foy was a

great man, and Casimir Périer without ambition; to his thinking, Lafayette was a political prophet, Courier a good [illegible] In short, he beheld noble chimerical visions.

The good man was domestic in his habits; he made part of [illegible] family circle in which his niece lived—the Ragons, Judge [illegible]pinot, Joseph Lebas, and the Matifats. Fifteen hundred [illegible]nes a year supplied his needs; the rest of his income was [illegible] in charitable deeds and in presents to his grand-niece; [illegible]r times a year he gave a dinner to his friends at Roland's [illegible] the Rue du Hasard, and took them afterwards to the play. He played the part of the old bachelor friend on whom mar[illegible]d women draw bills at sight for their fancies; for a [illegible]ntry excursion, a party for the Opéra or the Montagnes-[illegible]ajon; and Pillerault would be very happy at such times [illegible] pleasure he was giving, and felt the gladness in other [illegible].

If Molineux's character was written at large in his queer [illegible]niture, Pillerault's pure heart and simple life were no less [illegible]caled by his surroundings. His abode consisted of a lobby, [illegible]tting-room, and bedroom. But for the difference in size, [illegible] might have been a Carthusian's cell. The lobby, floored [illegible] red tiles, which were beeswaxed, boasted but one win[illegible], hung with dimity curtains edged with scarlet; mahog[illegible] chairs with red leather cushions, and studded with brass [illegible], stood against the wall, which was covered with an olive-[illegible]en paper, and adorned with pictures—a *Declaration of* [illegible]*pendence*, a portrait of Bonaparte as First Consul, and a [illegible] *of Austerlitz*. The furniture of the sitting-room, [illegible]ubtless left to the upholsterer, was yellow, and covered with [illegible]owered pattern; there was a carpet on the floor; the bronze [illegible]aments on the chimney-piece were not gilded. There was [illegible]nted fire-screen before the grate; a vase of artificial [illegible]ers under a glass shade stood on a console, and a liqueur [illegible] on a round table covered with a cloth. It was evident [illegible] the unused look of the room that it was a concession to [illegible]tion on the part of the retired ironmonger, who rarely [illegible]ived visitors.

His own room was as bare as that of a monk or an old soldier, the two men who make the truest estimate of life. In the alcove a holy-water stoup caught the eye, a profoundly touching confession of faith in a Republican stoic.

An old woman came in to do the work of the establishment; but so great was Pillerault's reverence for womankind, that he would not allow her to clean his shoes, and made an arrangement with a shoeblack.

His costume was plain, and never varied. He always wore a coat and breeches of blue cloth, a cotton waistcoat, a white cravat, and very low walking-shoes; and on high days and holidays a coat with metal buttons. He rose, breakfasted, went out, dined, and returned home when the evening was over with the strictest regularity, for a methodical life conduces to health and length of days. César, the Ragons, and the Abbé Loraux always avoided the subject of politics; those of his own circle knew better than to court attack by trying to convert him. Like his nephew and the Ragons, he put great faith in Roguin; for him a notary of Paris was always a being to be venerated, and probity incarnate. In the matter of the building land, Pillerault had examined it so thoroughly, that the remembrance of his investigations had given César moral support in the combat with his wife's forebodings.

As César climbed the seventy-two steps of the stairs which led to the brown doorway of his uncle's rooms, he thought within himself that the old man must be very hale to go up and down them daily without a murmur. He found the coat and breeches hanging on a peg outside, and Mme Vaillant busy rubbing and brushing them; while the philosopher himself, in his gray flannel dressing-gown, was breakfasting by the fireside, and conning the reports of parliamentary debates in the *Constitutionnel* or the *Journal du Commerce*.

"The affair is settled, uncle," said César; "they are just about to draft the documents; but if you have any doubts or regret about it, there is still time to cry off."

"Why should I cry off? It is a good piece of business, but it takes some time to realize, like everything that is [illegible] My fifty thousand francs are lying at the bank; the first instalment of five thousand francs for my business was paid in yesterday. As for the Ragons, they are putting [illegible] that they have into it."

"Why, how do they live?"

"Never mind; they live, at all events."

"I understand you, uncle," said Birotteau, deeply touched, and he grasped the austere old man's hands tightly in his.

"What are you going to do about this business?" Pillerault asked abruptly.

"I shall take three-eighths; you and the Ragons will take [illegible] eighth between you; I shall credit you with the amount [illegible] my books until they decide the question of the deeds."

"Good! Are you so very rich, my boy, that you pay down three hundred thousand francs? It looks to me as though you were risking a good deal of money outside your business; won't the business suffer? After all, it is your own affair. If you are pulled up, here are the funds at ninety: I could sell out two thousand francs in consols. [illegible] care, though, my boy; if you come to me, you will be [illegible] hands on your girl's fortune."

"Uncle, you say the kindest of things as if they were a matter of course; it goes to my heart to hear you."

"General Foy touched me after another fashion just now! There, at all events, it is settled. The building lots won't [illegible] away; we shall have them for half their value; and even [illegible] we should have to wait six years, there will still be some[illegible] in the way of interest; timber-yards would pay rent, [illegible] we cannot lose. There is only one thing, and that is im[illegible]ible—Roguin will not run away with our capital——"

"But that is what my wife said last night; she is [illegible]"

"That Roguin will run off with our money," said Pille[illegible], laughing; "and why?"

"Well, she says she doesn't like the cut of his features; and, like all men who cannot have women, he is frantic for——"

An incredulous smile stole over Pillerault's face; he tore a leaf out of a little book, filled in the amount, and signed his name.

"Here, this is an order on the bank for a hundred thousand francs, for Ragon's share and mine. Those poor people, though, to make up the money, sold out their fifteen shares in the Wortschin mines to your worthless rogue of a du Tillet. Good people in sore straits; it goes to one's heart to see it. And such good people they are, such noble people, the flower of the old-fashioned bourgeoisie, in fact! Their brother Popinot, the judge, knows nothing about it; they are hiding their affairs from him, lest they should hinder him from giving free course to his benevolence. People who have worked as I did for thirty years——"

"God grant that the Comagen Oil succeeds!" cried Birotteau, "and I shall be doubly pleased. Good-day, uncle; you are coming to dine with us on Sunday with the Ragons and Roguin, and M. Claparon is coming, for we are all going to sign the papers the day after to-morrow; to-morrow will be Friday, and I don't want to do bus——"

"Do you really believe in those superstitions?"

"I shall never believe that the day when the Son of God was put to death by men can be a lucky day, uncle. Why? —people stop all business even on the 21st of January."

"Good-bye till Sunday," said Pillerault abruptly.

"If it weren't for his political opinions," said Birotteau to himself, as he went downstairs again, "I do not know where they would find his equal here below. What are politics to him? He would get on very nicely without thinking of them at all. His infatuation shows that no one is perfect.—Three o'clock already!" said César, as he entered his shop.

"Are you going to take these bills, sir?" asked Célestin, holding out the umbrella-dealer's collection of bills.

"Yes, at six per cent, no commission.—Wife, put out all my things ready for me; I am going to call on M. Vauquelin, you know why. Above all things, a white cravat."

Birotteau gave some orders to his assistants; he did not see Popinot, guessed that his future partner had gone to dress for the visit, and went up at once to his own room, where the Dresden Madonna met his eyes in a magnificent frame, according to his orders.

"Well, it looks fine, doesn't it?"

"Why, papa, say it is beautiful, or people will laugh at you."

"Here is a girl for you that scolds her father! . . . Well, for my own part, I like *Hero and Leander* quite as much. The *Madonna* is a religious subject, which could be hung up in an oratory; but *Hero and Leander!* Ah! I will buy it, for the flask of oil suggested some ideas to me."

"But I don't understand, papa."

"Virginie, call a cab!" shouted César, in a voice that rang through the house. He had finished shaving, and the shy Anselme Popinot appeared, dragging his feet, for he thought of Césarine. He had not discovered as yet that he was not lame in the eyes of his lady-love, a sweet proof of love, which only those to whom fate has given some bodily deformity can receive.

"The press will be in working order to-morrow, sir," he said.

"Very well. What is the matter, Popinot?" asked César, seeing Anselme's flushed face.

"I am so glad, sir; I have found a place, a front and back shop, and a kitchen, and the rooms above, and a store-room, all for twelve hundred francs a year, in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants."

"We must have an eighteen years' lease of it," said Birotteau. "But let us go to M. Vauquelin, and we can talk on the way," and César and Popinot drove away under the eyes of the assistants, who were at a loss what to think of such a magnificent attire, and so unusual a portent as a cab, igno-

rant as they were of the mighty matters that occupied the owner of the *Queen of Roses.*

"So we shall soon know the truth about the hazel-nuts!" said the perfumer.

"Hazel-nuts?" queried Popinot.

"You have my secret, Popinot," said the perfumer; "I let slip the word 'hazel-nuts,' and that tells everything. Hazel-nut oil is the only oil which produces any effect on the hair; no other house has thought of it. When I saw the print of *Hero and Leander,* I said to myself, 'If the ancients put so much oil on their heads, there must have been some reason for it,' for the ancients are the ancients! In spite of modern pretensions, I am of Boileau's opinion about the ancients. From that I came to the idea of hazel-nuts, thanks to young Bianchon, the medical student, your relative; he told me that the students at the École put hazel-nut oil on their moustaches and whiskers to make them grow. All we want now is the illustrious M. Vauquelin's approval. Enlightened by him, we shall not deceive the public. Only just now I was over in the Market buying the raw material of a saleswoman there; and in another moment I shall be in the presence of one of the greatest scientific men in France for the quintessence of the matter. There's sense in proverbs—extremes meet. Trade is the intermediary between vegetable products and science, you see, my boy! Angélique Madou collects the material, M. Vauquelin distils it, and we sell an essence. Hazel-nuts are worth five sous the pound, M. Vauquelin will increase their value a hundred-fold, and we shall perhaps do a service to humanity; for if vanity is a plague of man, a good cosmetic is a benefit."

The devout admiration with which Popinot listened to the father of his Césarine stimulated Birotteau's eloquence; he indulged in the crudest rhetorical display that a philistine's brain can devise.

"Be reverent, Anselme," he said, as they reached the street in which Vauquelin lived; "we are about to enter

sanctuary of science. Put the *Madonna* in evidence, it without making a parade of it, on a chair in the dining-room. If only I can manage to say what I want to say without making a muddle of it!" cried Birotteau artlessly. Popinot, that man produces a chemical effect on me, the sound of his voice makes me quite hot inside, and even gives me a slight colic. He is my benefactor, Anselme, and in a few minutes he will be your benefactor too."

Popinot turned cold at the words, set down his feet as if he were treading on eggs, and looked uneasily round the room.

M. Vauquelin was in his study when Birotteau was announced. The man of science knew that the perfumer was a deputy-mayor and in high favor; he received his visitor.

"So you do not forget me now that you are so high up in the world," he said; "well, between a chemist and a perfumer there is but a hand's-breadth."

"Alas! there is a great distance between your genius and a plain man like me, sir; and as for what you call 'being high up in the world,' it is all owing to you, and I shall never forget it in this world or the next."

"Oh! in the next we shall all be equal they say, cobblers and kings."

"That is to say, those kings and cobblers who have lived virtuously," remarked Birotteau.

"Is this your son?" asked Vauquelin, looking at little Popinot, who was beyond expression amazed to find nothing extraordinary in the study. He had expected to see prodigious marvels, giant engines, vivified substances, and metals flying about.

"No, sir; but he is a young man in whom I am very much interested, and he has come to entreat your goodness, which is equal to your talent, and is it not infinite?" remarked Birotteau diplomatically. "We have come, after an interval of sixteen years, to consult you a second time on a matter of importance, concerning which I am as ignorant as a perfumer."

"Let us hear about it. What is it?"

"I know that the subject of hair occupies your nights, and that you are devoting yourself to the analysis of the substance! While you have been thinking for glory, I have been thinking too for trade."

"Dear M. Birotteau, what do you want of me—an analysis of hair?"

He took up a loose sheet.

"I am about to read a paper before the Académie des Sciences," he went on. "Hair is composed of a somewhat large proportion of mucus, a little colorless oil, a larger proportion of dark-greenish oil, and iron; I find a certain amount of oxide of manganese, and of phosphate of lime, and traces of carbonate of lime, and silica; sulphur enters largely into its composition. The proportions in which these different substances are present vary, and so cause the different colorings of hair. Red hair, for example, on analysis yields much more of the dark green oil than the other kinds give."

César and Popinot opened their eyes ludicrously wide.

"Nine things," cried Birotteau. "What, are there metals and oils in hair? It takes the word of a man like you, whom I venerate, to make me believe it. How extraordinary! . . . God is great, M. Vauquelin."

"Hair is produced by a follicular organ," the great chemist continued; "a follicle is a sort of bag open at both ends; at the one end it is connected with nerves and blood-vessels, and the hair issues from the other. According to some of our learned associates, one of whom is M. de Blainville, the hair is dead matter expelled from the sac or secreting gland, which is full of a pulpy tissue."

"It is like perspiration in sticks, as you might say," cried Popinot, for which the perfumer promptly kicked his shins.

Vauquelin smiled at Popinot's notion. On this, "He has capacity, hasn't he?" said César, looking at Popinot. "But if hair is dead, to begin with, sir, you can't possibly restore it,

and it is all over with us! the prospectus is nonsense! You don't know how funny the public is; you can't go and tell people——"

"That there is a rubbish heap on their heads," said Popinot, trying to make Vauquelin laugh again.

"An aërial catacomb," returned the chemist, keeping up the joke.

"And the nuts that are bought!" cried Birotteau, with a lively sense of the pecuniary loss. "But why do they sell——?"

"Reassure yourself," said Vauquelin, smiling. "I see; your secret for preventing the hair from falling out or turning gray is the matter in question. Listen; here are my conclusions after all my researches."

Popinot pricked up his ears at this like a startled leveret.

"The blanching of the fibres, dead or alive, is, in my opinion, produced by an interruption of the secretion of the coloring matter; this theory would explain the fact that some fur-bearing animals in cold climates turn white or some lighter color at the beginning of winter."

"Hm! Popinot."

"It is evident," Vauquelin continued, "that the change of color is due to sudden change in the temperature of the circumambient air——"

"Circumambient, Popinot—mind that! mind that!" cried César.

"Yes," said Vauquelin, "to alternations of cold and heat, or to interior phenomena, which produce the same effect. So, in all probability, headaches and other local affections dissipate the fluid or derange the secretions. The inside of the head is the doctor's province. As for the outside, put on your cosmetics by all means."

"Well, sir," said Birotteau, "now I can breathe again after what you say. I thought of selling the oil of hazel-nuts, remembering the use the ancients made of oil for their hair; but the ancients are the ancients, I am of Boileau's opinion. Why did wrestlers oil themselves——?"

"Olive-oil would do quite as well as oil of hazel-nuts," said Vauquelin, who had paid no attention to Birotteau's remarks. "Any oil will do to protect the hair bulbs from outside influences injurious to the substances which it contains in process of formation; in course of deposit, we chemists would say. Perhaps you are right; the essential oil of hazel-nuts is an irritant, so Dupuytren once told me. I will try to find out the difference between walnut and beech-nut oils, colza, olive, and so forth."

"Then I am not mistaken," Birotteau exclaimed triumphantly, "and a great man bears me out in my opinion. Macassar is done for! Macassar, sir, is a cosmetic they give you, that is, sell you, and sell very dear, to make your hair grow."

"My dear M. Birotteau," said Vauquelin, "there are not two ounces of oil of Macassar in Europe. Oil of Macassar produces not the slightest effect on hair. The Malays will pay its weight in gold for it, because of its supposed preservative action on the hair, not knowing that whale oil is quite as good. No power chemical or divine——"

"Oh! divine—do not say that, M. Vauquelin."

"Why, my dear sir, God's first law is conformity with Himself; without unity there is no power——"

"Oh, looked at in that way——"

"No power whatever can make the hair grow on a bald head, and you cannot dye white or red hair without danger; but you will do no harm, and there will be no fraud in extolling your oil, and I think that those who use it might preserve their hair."

"Do you think that the Royal Academy of Science would approve it?"

"Oh! it is no discovery," said M. Vauquelin. "And besides, quacks have taken the name of the Academy in vain so often, that it would not help you at all. My conscience will not allow me to look on oil of hazel-nuts as a prodigy."

"What would be the best way of extracting it, by pressure or by decoction?" asked Birotteau.

"You will obtain the most oil by pressure between two hot

...; but if the plates are cold, it will be of better quality. ...ought to be applied to the skin itself, and not rubbed into ...air," continued Vauquelin good-naturedly, "or the effect ...be lost."

"Mind you remember this, Popinot," said Birotteau, as ... face flushed up with enthusiasm.—"You see in him, sir, ...ung man who will reckon this day among the great days ...is life. He knew and revered you before he had seen ... Ah! we often talk of you at home; a name that is ...ways in the heart comes often to the lips. We pray every ... for you, my wife and daughter and I, as we ought to do ...r our benefactor."

"It is too much for so little," said Vauquelin, embarrassed ... the perfumer's voluble gratitude.

"Tut, tut, tut!" said Birotteau. "You cannot hinder us ...rom loving you, you who will accept nothing from me. You ...e like the sun; you shed light around you, and those on ...om it shines can do nothing for you in return."

The man of science rose, smiling, to his feet; Birotteau ...d Anselme Popinot rose also.

"Look round, Anselme; take a good look at this study. If ... will allow him, sir? Your time is so valuable, perhaps ... will never come here again."

"Well, are you satisfied with your business?" asked ...auquelin, turning to Birotteau; "for, after all, we are both ...s men of business——"

"Pretty well, sir," said Birotteau, going towards the din...g-room, whither Vauquelin followed him; "but it will take ... great deal of capital to start this oil under the name of ...magen Essence——"

"'Essence' and 'Comagen' are two words that clash. Call ...ur cosmetic Birotteau's Oil; or if you have no mind to blaze ...r name abroad, take another——Why, there is the Dres...n Madonna. . . . Ah! M. Birotteau, you mean us to ...ll out at parting."

"M. Vauquelin," said the perfumer, taking both the chem...t's hands in his, "the scarce print has no value save for the

persistent efforts which I have made to find it; all Germany has been ransacked for a proof before letters on India paper; I knew you wished to have it, you were too busy to procure it yourself, so I have taken it upon myself to be your agent. Please accept, not a paltry print, but the earnest efforts, the care, and pains which prove a boundless devotion. I should have been glad if you had wanted some substances that could only be found in the depths of an abyss, that I might come to tell you, 'Here they are! We have so many chances to be forgotten, let me put myself, my wife, and daughter, and the son-in-law whom I shall have one day, all before your eyes; and say to yourself when you see the Madonna, 'There are honest folk who think of me.'"

"I accept it," said Vauquelin.

Popinot and Birotteau wiped their eyes, so much moved were they by the kind tone in which the chemist spoke.

"Will you carry your kindness yet further?" asked the perfumer.

"What is it?" asked Vauquelin.

"I am inviting a few of my friends—(here he raised himself on tiptoe, but his face assumed a humble expression)—partly to celebrate the liberation of the soil, and partly on the occasion of my own promotion to the Legion of Honor."

"Aha!" said Vauquelin in astonishment.

"It may be that I have shewn myself worthy of this signal mark of royal favor, by discharging my functions at the Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for the Bourbons on the steps of Saint-Roch's Church on the 13th of Vendémiaire, when I was wounded by Napoleon. . . . My wife is giving a ball on Sunday in twenty days' time; will you come to it, sir? Do us the honor of dining with us on that day; and for my own part, it will be as if they had given me the Cross twice. I will write to you in good time."

"Very well, yes," said Vauquelin.

"My heart is swelling with pleasure," cried the perfumer when they were in the street. "He will come to my house! I am afraid that I have forgotten what he said about hair; do you remember it, Popinot?"

"Yes, sir, and in twenty years' time I shall still remember it."

"A great man, that he is! What insight and what pene-tion!" exclaimed Birotteau. "He went straight to the nt, he read our thoughts at once, and showed us how to a clean sweep of Macassar Oil. Ah! nothing can make r grow, Macassar, so that is a lie! Popinot, there is a une within our grasp. So let us be at the factory by o'clock to-morrow morning, the nuts will come in, and 'll make the oil. There is no use in his saying that any ll do; it would be all over with us if the public knew . If there were not a little hazel-nut oil and scent in composition of ours, what excuse should we have for g it at three or four francs for as many ounces?"

"And you are to be decorated, sir!" said Popinot. "What for —"

r commerce, isn't it, my boy?"

ar Birotteau, sure of a fortune, looked so triumphant, the assistants noticed his expression, and made signs to her; for the appearance of a cab, and the fact that ployer and his cashier had changed their clothes, en rise to the wildest imaginings. The very evident tion of the pair, revealed by the diplomatic glances ged between them, and the hopeful eyes that Popinot ed once or twice on Césarine, announced that some im-nt event was imminent, and confirmed the assistants' ons. The smallest chance events in their busy and st monastic lives were as interesting to them as to any r in solitary confinement. Mme. César's face (for ended doubtfully to the Olympian looks her husband on her) portended some new development in the busi-or at any other time Mme. César would have been y content,—Mme. César, who was so blithe over a day, and to-day the takings had amounted to the extra-ry sum of six thousand francs; some old outstanding had been paid.

dining-room and the kitchen were both on the mezza-

nine floor, where César and Constance had lived during the first years of their married life. This dining-room, where their honeymoon had been spent, looked like a little drawing-room. The kitchen windows looked out into a little yard; a passage separated the two rooms, and gave access to the staircase, contrived in a corner of the back-shop.

Raguet the errand boy looked after the shop while they sat at dinner; but when dessert appeared, the assistants went downstairs again, and left César and his wife and daughter to finish their meal by the fireside. This tradition had been handed down from the days of the Ragons, who had kept up all the old-fashioned customs and usages in full vigor, and set the same enormous distance between themselves and the assistants that formerly existed between masters and apprentices. Césarine or Constance would then prepare the cup of coffee, which the perfumer took in a low chair by the fire. It was the hour when César told his wife all the small news of the day; he would tell her anything that he had seen in Paris, or what they were doing in the Faubourg du Temple, and about the difficulties that arose there.

"This is certainly one of the most memorable days in our lives, wife!" he began, when the assistants had gone downstairs. "The hazel-nuts have been bought, the hydraulic press will be ready for work to-morrow, the matter of the building lands has been concluded. And, while I think of it, just put away this order on the bank," he went on, handing over to her Pillerault's draft. "The redecoration of the rooms, our new rooms, has been settled.—Dear me! I saw a very queer man to-day in the Cour Batave!"

And he told the women about M. Molineux.

"I see," his wife broke in, in the middle of a tirade, "that you will have to pay two hundred thousand francs!"

"True, my wife," said the perfumer, with mock humility. "Good Lord! and how are we to pay it? for the building lands near the Madeleine, that will be the finest quarter in Paris some day, must be taken as worth nothing."

"Some day, César."

"Dear, dear!"—he continued his joke—"my three-eighths ·l only be worth a million in six years' time. And how l we pay two hundred thousand francs?" asked César, ·ng as though he were aghast. "Well, we will pay it with ·." and he drew from his pocket one of Mme. Madou's ·el-nuts, which he had carefully kept.

He held it up between his thumb and finger. Constance d nothing; but Césarine, whose curiosity was tickled, ·ought her father his cup of coffee with a "Come, now, papa, ·e you joking?"

The perfumer, like his assistants, had noticed the glances Popinot had given Césarine during dinner; he meant to clear ·p his suspicions.

"Well, little girl, this hazel-nut is to work a revolution the house. There will be one less under our roof after to-·ght."

Césarine looked straight at her father, as who should say, "What is that to me?"

"Popinot is going away."

Although César was a poor observer, although his remark ·d been meant to prepare the way for the announcement of · new firm of A. Popinot and Company, as well as for a ·p for his daughter, his father's tenderness told him the ·et of the vague emotions which sprang up in the girl's ·, and blossomed in red upon her cheek and brow, bright-·ng her eyes before they fell. César thought at once that · word had been exchanged between Césarine and Popinot. ·thing of the kind had happened; the boy and girl under-·tood each other, after the fashion of shy young lovers, with-t a word.

There are moralists who hold that love is the most involun-·y, the most disinterested and least calculating of all pas-·ns, a mother's love always excepted, a doctrine which con-·ns a gross error. The larger part of mankind may be ·orant of their motives; but any sympathy, physical or ·tal, is none the less based upon calculations made by ·rain or heart or animal instincts. Love is essentially an

egoistical affection, and egoism implies profound calculation. For the order of mind which is only impressed by outward and visible results, it may seem a improbable or unusual thing that a poor, lame, red-haired [illegible] should find favor in the eyes of a beautiful girl like Césarine; and yet it was only what might be expected from the workings of the bourgeois mind in matters of sentiment. The explanation would account for other marriages that are a constant source of amazement to onlookers, between tall or beautiful women and insignificant men, or when some well-grown stripling marries some ugly little creature.

For a man affected with any physical deformity, be it a club foot, lameness, a hunch-back, excessive ugliness, spot, blemish, or disfigurement, Roguin's infirmity, or other anomalous affection for which his progenitors are not responsible, there are but two courses open; he must either make himself feared, or cultivate an exquisite goodness—he cannot afford to steer an undecided middle course between the two extremes like the rest of humanity. The first alternative requires talent, genius, or force of character; for a man can only inspire terror by his power to do harm, impose respect by his genius, or compel fear by his prodigious wit. In the second he studies to be adored; he lends himself admirably to feminine tyranny, and is wiser in love than others of irreproachable physical proportions.

Anselme Popinot had been brought up by the good Ragons, upright citizens of the best type, and by his uncle the judge—a course of training which, with his ingenuous and religious nature, had led him to redeem his slight deformity by the perfection of his character. Constance and César, struck by a disposition which makes youth so attractive, had often praised Anselme in Césarine's hearing. With all their narrowness in other respects, this shopkeeper and his wife possessed nobility of soul and hearts that were quick to comprehend. Their praises found an echo in the girl's own heart; in spite of her inexperience, she read in Anselme's frank eyes a passion that is always flattering, no matter what the age, rank, or figure of the lover may be.

Little Popinot, not being a well-shaped man, had all the
e reasons for loving a woman. Should she be fair, he
d be her lover till his dying day; love would give him
tion; he would work himself to death to make his wife
py; he would suffer her to be the sovereign mistress of
ome; and her empire over him would be boundless.

This, crudely stated, is perhaps what Césarine thought,
e sciously within herself; she had had a bird's-eye glimpse
the harvests of love, and she had drawn her own infer-
s; her mother's happiness was under her eyes, she wished
other life for herself; instinctively she discerned in
me another César, polished by education, as she herself
been. In her dreams, Popinot was the mayor of an
issement, and she liked to imagine herself asking for
ptions to charities in her district, as her own mother
n the parish of Saint-Roch. And so at length she forgot
one of Popinot's legs was shorter than the other, and
d have been quite capable of asking, "Does he really
p?" She liked the clear eyes; she liked to see the change
came over them when, at a glance from her, they lighted
once with a flash of timid love, and then fell despond-
again.

Roguin's head clerk, Alexandre Crottat, gifted with a pre-
is knowledge of the world, acquired by professional ex-
, disgusted Césarine with his half-cynical, half-good-
red air, after putting her out of patience with his
monplace talk. Popinot's silence revealed a gentle
; she liked to watch the half-sad smile with which he
d meaningless trivialities; the babble which made him
always roused a feeling of annoyance in her; they smiled
ked condolence at each other.

Anselme's mental superiority did not prevent him from
ng hard with his hands; the way in which he threw
elf into everything that he did also pleased Césarine;
essed that while all the other assistants said, "Césarine
ng to be married to M. Roguin's head clerk," Anselme,

lame and poor and red-haired, did not despair of winning her. The strength of a hope proves the strength of a love.

"Where is he going?" Césarine asked, trying to look indifferent.

"He is going to set up for himself in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants! And, upon my word, by the grace of God!——" But neither his wife nor daughter understood the ejaculation When Birotteau's mind encountered any difficulty, he behaved like an insect that encounters an obstacle, he swerved to left or right; so now he changed the subject, promising himself to speak of Césarine to his wife.

"I told uncle your notions about Roguin and your fears; he began to laugh," he went on, addressing Constance.

"You ought never to repeat things that we say between ourselves," she cried. "Poor Roguin! he may be the most honest man in the world; he is fifty-eight years old, and I expect he no more thinks——"

She too broke off; she saw that Césarine was listening, and warned César of that fact by a glance.

"So I did well to strike the bargain."

"Why, you are the master," returned she.

César took both his wife's hands in his, and kissed her on the forehead. That answer had always been her passive form of assent to her husband's projects. And with that, Birotteau went downstairs into the shop.

"Come!" he cried, speaking to the assistants, "we will put up the shutters at ten o'clock. We must do a stroke of work, gentlemen! We must set about moving all the furniture from the first floor to the second to-night! We shall have to put the little pots into the big ones, as the saying is, so as to give my architect elbow-room to-morrow.—Popinot has gone out without leave," said César, looking round. "Oh! I forgot, he does not sleep here.—He is gone to see about the shop, or else he is putting down M. Vauquelin's ideas," he thought.

"We know why the furniture is being moved, sir," said Célestin, spokesman for the two assistants and Raguet, who

stood by him. "May we be allowed to congratulate you on an honor which reflects glory on the whole establishment? . . . Popinot told us——"

"Well, boys, it can't be helped; I have been decorated. So we are inviting a few friends, partly to celebrate the liberation of the soil, and partly on the occasion of my own promotion to the Legion of Honor. It may be that I have shown myself worthy of this signal mark of royal favor by the discharge of my functions at the Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for the Royalist cause—when I was your age, on the steps of Saint-Roch, on the 13th of Vendémiaire; and, on my word, Napoleon the Emperor, as they called him, gave me my wound. For I was wounded, and on the thigh, what is more, and Mme. Ragon nursed me Be brave, and you will be rewarded! So there, you see, my children, that a mishap is never all loss."

"People don't fight in the streets nowadays," said Célestin.

"Well, we must hope," said César, and thereupon he took occasion to read his assistants a little homily, which he rounded off with an invitation.

The prospect of a dance put new life into the three assistants; under the stimulus of the excitement, the three, with Virginie and Raguet, performed acrobatic feats. They came and went up and down the stairs with their loads, and nothing was broken, nothing was upset. By two o'clock in the morning the removal was accomplished; César and his wife kept on the second floor, Célestin and the second assistant occupied Popinot's room. The third floor was converted, for the time being, into a furniture warehouse.

When the assistants had gone down into the shop after supper, Popinot, usually so quiet and equable, had been as fidgety as a racehorse just arrived upon the course. A burning desire to do something great was upon him, induced by a superabundance of nervous fluid, which turns the diaphragm of the lover or the man of restless ambition into a furnace.

"What can be the matter with you?" Célestin had asked.

"What a day! I am setting up for myself, my dear fellow,"

he whispered in Célestin's ear, "and M. César is to be decorated."

"You are very lucky; the governor is helping you," exclaimed the assistant.

Popinot gave him no answer; he vanished, whirled away by the wind—the wind of success.

"Oh, as to lucky!" said an assistant, as he sorted gloves in dozens, to his neighbor, who was busy checking the prices on the tickets. "The governor has seen the eyes that Popinot has been making at Mlle. Césarine; he is a shrewd one, the governor, so he is getting rid of Anselme; it would be difficult to refuse outright, because of the relatives. Célestin takes the trick for generosity."

Anselme Popinot meanwhile had turned down the Rue Saint-Honoré and hurried along the Rue des Deux-Écus to secure some one in whom his commercial second-sight beheld the principal instrument of success. Judge Popinot had once done a service to this young man, the cleverest commercial traveler in Paris, whose activity and triumphant gift of the gab was to earn for him at a later day the title of "The Illustrious." At this time the great commercial traveler was devoting his energies to the hat trade and the "fancy-goods line"; he was simply Gaudissart as yet, without the prefix, but at the age of twenty-two he had already distinguished himself; his magnetic influence upon customers was beginning to be recognized. He was thin and bright-eyed at that time; he had an eloquent face, an indefatigable memory, a quick perception of the taste of those with whom he came in contact; he deserved to be, what he afterwards became—the king of commercial travelers, the Frenchman *par excellence*.

Popinot had come across Gaudissart some days previously, and the latter had announced that he was about to go on a journey; the hope of finding him still in Paris had sent Popinot flying down the Rue des Deux-Écus. At the coach-office he learned that the commercial traveler had taken his place. Gaudissart's leave-taking of his beloved city had taken the

pe of an evening at the Vaudeville, where there was a new . Popinot resolved to wait for him. To confide the y of the hazel-nut oil to this invaluable launcher of com- al enterprises, already courted and cherished by the best es, was like drawing a bill of exchange on fortune!

Popinot had claims on Gaudissart. The commercial trav- , so skilled in the art of entangling that froward race, the country shopkeepers, in his toils, had once allowed him- to become entangled in a political web, in the first con- against the Bourbons after the Hundred Days; and sart, to whom open air was a vital necessity, found f in prison with a capital charge hanging over him. Popinot, the examining magistrate, saw that it was a of youthful folly that implicated Gaudissart in the air, and set him at liberty; but if the young man had ed upon a magistrate eager to commend himself to the orities, or upon a rabid Royalist, the luckless pioneer ommerce might have mounted the scaffold. Gaudissart, o knew that he owed his life to the judge, was in despair, ause a barren gratitude was all the return he could make; as it was impossible to thank a judge for doing justice, ad betaken himself to the Ragons, and there sworn fealty the family of Popinot.

While Popinot waited, he naturally spent the time in going e his shop in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants once more. He ed for the landlord's address, so as to come to terms with about the lease. Then, wandering through the murky ith about the Great Market, with his thoughts full of ans of making a rapid fortune, Popinot came the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, and there met with a wonder- auspicious opportunity, with which César's heart gladdened on the morrow. Then he took up his at the door of the Hôtel du Commerce at the end of the des Deux-Écus; and towards midnight heard, afar off, uplifted in the Rue de Grenelle; it was Gaudissart ng a bit of the last song in the piece, to the accompani- of the sound of a walking-stick, trailed with expression pavement.

"Sir," cried Anselme, suddenly emerging from the doorway, "can I have a couple of words with you?"

"Eleven, if you like," said the other, raising a loaded cane.

"I am Popinot," said poor Anselme.

"Right," said Gaudissart, recognizing his friend. "What do you want? Money? Absent on leave, but there is some somewhere. An arm for a duel? I am at your service from heel to head.

"You see him where he stands—
Every inch a Frenchman and a soldier!"

"Come and have ten minutes' talk with me, not in your room, we might be overheard, but on the Quai de l'Horloge; there is nobody there at this time of night," said Popinot, "it is a question of the greatest importance."

"You are in a hurry, are you? Come along!"

Ten minutes later, Gaudissart, now put in possession of Popinot's secrets, recognized the importance of the matter.

"Approach, ye hairdressers and retail perfumers," cried Gaudissart, mimicking Lafon in the Cid. "I will get hold of all the perfumers of France and Navarre. Oh! I have it! I was going away, but I shall stop here now and take agencies from the Parisian perfumery trade."

"Why?"

"To choke off your competitors, innocent! By taking on their agencies, I can make their perfidious cosmetics drink to their own confusion in your oil, for I shall talk of nothing else and push no other kind. A fine commercial traveler's dodge! Aha! we are the diplomatists of commerce. Famous! As for your prospectus I will see to it. I have known Andoche Finot since we were boys; his father is a hatter in the Rue du Coq, the old fellow started me; it was through him that I began to travel in the hat line. Andoche is a very clever fellow; he has the cleverness of all the heads that his father ever fitted with hats. He is in the literary line; he does the minor theatres for the *Courrier des Spectacles*. His father, an old fox, has abundant reason for not liking cleverness; he

[illegible]n't believe in cleverness; it is impossible to make him [illegible] that cleverness will sell, and that a young man of spirit [illegible] make a fortune by his wits; indeed, as to spirit, the only [illegible] he approves of is proof-spirit. Old Finot is reducing [illegible] Finot by famine. Andoche can do anything, and he [illegible] friend, moreover, and I don't rub against fools (except [illegible] way of business). Finot does mottoes for the *Fidèle* [illegible] which pays him, while the newspapers, for which he [illegible] like a galley slave, snub him right and left. How [illegible] they are in that line! It is just like it is in the fancy [illegible] trade.

[illegible] not wrote a splendid one-act comedy for Mlle. Mars, [illegible]atest of the great. (Ah! there's a woman that I ad-[illegible]) Well, and to see it put on the stage at all, he had [illegible] it to the Gaité. Andoche understands prospectuses; [illegible] into a man's ideas about business, he is not proud, [illegible] block out our prospectus *gratis*. Goodness! we will [illegible] to a bowl of punch and little cakes; for, no nonsense, [illegible]not; I will travel for you without commission or ex-[illegible]; your competitors shall pay me, I will bamboozle them. [illegible] understand each other clearly. The success of this [illegible] a point of honor with me; my reward shall be to [illegible]t-man at your wedding! I will go to Italy, Germany, [illegible] England! I will take placards in every language with [illegible] have them posted up everywhere, in the villages, at [illegible] doors, and in all the good situations that I know in [illegible] towns! The oil shall make a blaze; it shall be on [illegible] head! Ah! your marriage will not be a marriage in [illegible]-colors; it shall be done in oils! You shall have your [illegible], or I am not 'The Illustrious,' a nickname old [illegible] gave me because I made a success of his gray hats. I [illegible] sticking to my own line, too, the human head; oil [illegible], as is well known, are meant to preserve the hair of [illegible] public."

Popinot went to his aunt's house, where he was to spend the [illegible], in such a fever, brought on by visions of success, that [illegible] streets seemed to him to be rivers of oil. He scarcely

slept at all, dreamed that his hair was growing at a furious rate, and beheld two angels, who unrolled above his head a scroll (as in a pantomime), whereon the words *Cesarian Oil* were written; and he awoke, but remembered his dream, and determined to give the name to the oil of hazel-nuts. He saw the will of heaven revealed in this fancy.

César and Popinot were both at the factory in the Faubourg du Temple long before the hazel-nuts arrived. While they waited for Mme. Mahon's porters, Popinot in high glee told the history of his [illegible] with Gaudissart.

"We have the illustrious Gaudissart for us; we shall be millionaires!" cried the perfumer, holding out a hand to his cashier, with the air of a Louis XIV. receiving a Maréchal de Villars after Denain.

"And yet another thing," said the happy assistant, drawing a bottle from his pocket, a gourd-shaped flask, flattened so as to present several sides. "I have found ten thousand bottles like this one, ready made and washed, at four sous and six months' credit."

"Anselme," said Birotteau, beholding this marvel, "yesterday (here his voice grew solemn), yesterday, in the garden of the Tuileries—yes, no longer ago than yesterday, your words to me were, 'I shall succeed.' To-day, I myself say to you, 'You will succeed!' Four sous! Six months! An entirely new shape! Macassar is shaking in his shoes; what a deathblow for Macassar! What a good thing that I have bought so all the nuts I could lay my hands on in Paris! But where did you find these bottles?"

"I was waiting to speak to Gaudissart, and sauntering about——"

"Just as I once did," exclaimed Birotteau.

"And as I went down the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, I saw a wholesale glass merchant's place, a dealer in bell-glasses and glass shades, who has a very large stock; I saw this bottle—Oh! it stared me in the face like a flash of light; something said, 'Here is the thing for you!'"

A born merchant! He shall have my daughter," muttered Cæsar.

"I went, and saw thousands of the bottles standing there [illegible]"

"Did you ask him about them?"

"You do not think me such a ninny!" cried Anselme, [illegible] at the thought.

"Born merchant!" repeated Birotteau.

"I went in to ask for glass shades for little wax statuettes. [illegible] I was bargaining for the glass shades, I found fault [illegible] the shape of these bottles. That led to a general con[illegible]: my bottle merchant went from one thing to another, [illegible] told me that Faille and Bouchot, who failed lately, were [illegible] to bring out a cosmetic, and wanted a [illegible] way [illegible]. He distrusted them; he wanted half the money down; [illegible] and Bouchot, hoping for a success, parted with the [illegible], and the failure came out while the bottles were being [illegible]. When they put in a claim to the trustees for the rest, [illegible] trustees compromised the matter by leaving them with the bottles and half the money that had been paid, as an [illegible] for goods which they said were absurdly shaped, [illegible] impossible to dispose of. The bottles cost here eight sous, [illegible] would be glad to let any one have them for four. He [illegible] have them on his hands for Heaven knows how long; [illegible] was no sale for such a shape. 'Will you engage to [illegible] ten thousand at four sous? I can take the bottles off [illegible]; I am M. Birotteau's assistant.' And so I opened [illegible] subject, and drew him out, led him on, and put pressure [illegible], and he is ours."

"Four sous!" said Birotteau. "Do you know that we can get out the oil at three francs, and make thirty sous, leaving [illegible] to the retailers?"

"The Cæsarian Oil!" cried Popinot.

"Cæsarian Oil? . . . Ah, master lover, you have a [illegible] to flatter father and daughter. Very well; let it be [illegible]rian Oil if you like. The Cæsars conquered the world; [illegible] must have had famous heads of hair."

"Cæsar was bald," said Popinot.

"Because he did not use our oil, people will say. The Cesarian Oil at three francs; Macassar Oil costs twice as much. Gaudissart is in it; we shall make a hundred thousand francs a year, for we will set down all heads that respect themselves for a dozen bottles every twelve-month; eighteen francs of profit! Say there are eighteen thousand heads—a hundred and forty-four thousand francs. We shall be millionaires."

When the hazel-nuts arrived, Raguet and the work-people, with Popinot and César, cracked the shells, and a sufficient quantity was pressed. In four hours' time they had several pounds' weight of oil. Popinot took some of it to Vauquelin, who presented him with a formula for diluting the essential oil with a less expensive medium and for perfuming it. Popinot straightway took steps for taking out a patent for the invention and the improvement. It was Popinot's ambition to pay his share of the expense of starting the enterprise, and the devoted Gaudissart lent the money for the deposit.

Prosperity has an intoxicating effect, which always turns weak heads. One result of this uplifted state of mind is readily foreseen. Grindot came. He brought with him a sketch in water-colors of a charming interior, the design for the future rooms when furnished. Birotteau was carried away with it. He agreed to everything, and the workmen began at once; every stroke of the pickaxe drew groans from the house, and from Constance. The painter, M. Lourdois, a very wealthy contractor, who engaged to leave nothing undone, talked of gilding the drawing-room. Constance interposed at this.

"M. Lourdois," said she, "you have thirty thousand francs a year of your own; you live in your own house, and you can do what you like in it; but for people like us——"

"Madame, commerce ought to shine; it should not suffer itself to be eclipsed by the aristocracy. Besides, here is M. Birotteau in the Government; he is a public man——"

"Yes, but he is still in the shop," said Constance aloud, before the assistants and her five auditors; "neither he, nor I, nor his friends, nor his enemies will forget that."

Birotteau raised himself on tiptoe several times, with hands clasped behind his back.

"My wife is right," said he. "We will be modest in prosperity. Besides, so long as a man is in business, he ought to be careful of his expenses, and to keep them within bounds; indeed, he is bound by law not to indulge in 'excessive expenditure.' If the enlargement of my premises, and the amount spent on the alterations, exceeds a certain limit, it would be imprudent in me to go beyond it; you yourself would blame me, Lourdois. The quarter has its eyes upon me; successful people are looked upon jealously and envied.—Ah! you will soon know that, young man," he said, addressing Grindot; "if they slander us, at any rate let us give them no cause to say evil of us."

"Neither slander nor spite can touch you," said Lourdois; "your position makes an exception of you; and you have had such a great experience of business, that you know how to keep your affairs within due limits. You are shrewd."

"I have had some experience of business, it is true; do you know the reason why we are enlarging our house? If I exact a heavy penalty to secure punctuality it is——"

"No."

"Well, then, my wife and I are inviting a few friends, partly to celebrate the liberation of the soil, partly on the occasion of my promotion to the Order of the Legion of Honor."

"What, what?" cried Lourdois. "Have they given you the Cross?"

"Yes. It may be that I have shown myself worthy of this signal mark of Royal favor by discharging my functions at the Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for the Royalist cause on the 13th of Vendémiaire at Saint-Roch, when I was defended by Napoleon. Will you come and bring your wife and your young lady——?"

"Enchanted by the honor you condescend to bestow upon me," said Lourdois, a Liberal. "But you are a droll fellow, Birotteau; you mean to make sure that I shall keep my word, and that is why you ask me to come. Well, well; I will set

my best workmen on to it; we will have roaring fires to dry the paint and use drying processes, for it will not do to dance in a room full of steam from the damp plaster. The surface shall be varnished, so that there shall be no smell."

Three days later, the announcement of Birotteau's forthcoming ball created a flutter in the commercial world of that quarter. And not only so, every one could see for himself the timber props, necessitated by the hurried alteration of the staircase, and the square wooden shaft holes, through which the rubbish was shot into the carts beneath. The men in their haste worked by torchlight, for they had a night-and-day shift, and this collected idlers and inquisitive gazers in the street. On such preparations as these, the gossip of the neighborhood reared sumptuous fabrics of conjecture.

On the Sunday, when the documents relative to the building land were to be signed, M. and Mme. Ragon, and uncle Pillerault, came at four o'clock, after vespers. César said that as the house was so much pulled to pieces, he could only ask Charles Claparon, Roguin, and Crottat for that day. The notary brought a copy of the *Journal des Débats,* in which M. de la Billardière had inserted the following paragraph:—

"We hear that the liberation of the soil will be celebrated with enthusiasm throughout France; but, in Paris, the members of the municipal administration have felt that the time had come for reviving the splendor of the capital, which has been eclipsed during the foreign occupation, from a feeling of patriotism. Each of the mayors and deputy-mayors proposes to give a ball, so that the winter season promises to be a very brilliant one, and the National movement will be followed up. Among the many fêtes about to take place is the much-talked-of ball to be given by M. Birotteau, recently nominated for the Legion of Honor, and so widely known for his devotion to the Royalist cause. M. Birotteau, wounded in the affair of Saint-Roch on the 13th of Vendémiaire, and one of the most highly respected judges of the Consular Tribunal, has doubly deserved this distinction."

"How well they write nowadays!" exclaimed César.—"They talking about us in the paper," he added, turning to Herault.

"Well, and what of that?" returned the uncle, who particu- detested the *Journal des Débats*.

"Perhaps the paragraph may sell some of the Pâte des Sul- and the Toilet Lotion," said Mme. César in a low voice Mme. Ragon. Mme. Birotteau did not share her husband's laration.

Mme. Ragon, a tall, thin woman, with a sharp nose and thin looked a very fair imitation of a marquise of the *ancien* A somewhat wide margin of red encircled her eyes, sometimes happens with aged women who have known troubles. Her fine austere face, in spite of its kindli- was dignified, and there was moreover a quaint something her which struck beholders, yet did not excite a smile, something interpreted by her manner and her dress. She mittens; she carried in all weathers a cane umbrella, as Marie Antoinette used at the Trianon; her favorite lor was that particular pale shade of brown known as *feuille-*; her skirts hung from her waist in folds, which will er be seen again, for the dowager ladies of a bygone day taken their secret with them. Mme. Ragon had not en up the black mantilla bordered with square-meshed lace; the ornaments in her old-fashioned caps reminded of the filagree work on old picture-frames. She took f with the dainty neatness and the little gestures which r generation may recall, if they have been so fortu- as to see their great-aunt or grandmother solemnly set old snuff-box on the table beside her, and shake the stray from her fichu.

The Sieur Ragon was a little man, five feet high at the t, with a countenance of the nutcracker type. Two eyes visible, two prominent cheek-bones, a nose, and a chin. had lost his teeth, he mumbled half his words, but he l like a brook, politely, somewhat pompously, and always a smile—the same smile with which he had greeted the

fair ladies of quality whom one chance or another brought to his shop. His hair, tightly scraped back from his forehead and powdered, described a snowy half-moon on his head, with a pair of "pigeon's wings" on either side of a neat queue tied with ribbon. He wore a cornflower-blue coat, a white waistcoat, silk breeches and stockings, black silk gloves, and shoes with gold buckles to them. The most peculiar thing about him was his habit of walking out in the street hat in hand. He looked rather like a messenger of the Chamber of Peers, or some usher-in-waiting at the palace—one of those attendant satellites of some great power, which shine with a reflected glory, and remain intrinsically insignificant.

"Well, Birotteau," he remarked, and from his tone he might have been addressing an assistant, "are you sorry now, my boy, that you took our advice in those days? Did we ever doubt the gratitude of our beloved royal family?"

"You must be very happy, my dear," said Mme. Ragon, addressing Mme. Birotteau.

"Yes, indeed," returned the fair Constance, who always fell under the charm of that cane umbrella, those butterfly caps, those tight-fitting sleeves, and the ample fichu *à la Julie* that Mme. Ragon wore.

"Césarine looks charming.—Come here, pretty child," said Mme. Ragon. She spoke in a patronizing manner, and with a high head-voice.

"Shall we settle the business before dinner?" asked uncle Pillerault.

"We are waiting for M. Claparon," said Roguin; "he was dressing when I left him."

"M. Roguin," Cesar began, "does he quite understand that we are to dine in a wretched little *entresol*——"

("Sixteen years ago he thought it magnificent," murmured Constance.)

"Among the rubbish, and with all the workmen about?"

"Pooh! you will find him a good fellow, and not hard to please," said Roguin.

"I have left Raguet to look after the shop; we cannot come

in and out of our own door now; as you have seen, it has all ... pulled down," César returned.

"Why did you not bring your nephew?" asked Pillerault; ... Mme. Ragon.

"Shall we see him later?" suggested Césarine.

"No, darling," said Mme. Ragon. "Anselme, dear boy, is ...rking himself to death. I am afraid of that close street ...re the sun never shines, that vile-smelling Rue des Cinq-...ants; the gutter is always black or blue or green. I ... afraid he may die there. But when young people set ...r minds upon anything——!" she said, turning to Césa-... with a gesture that interpreted "mind" as "heart."

"Then, has the lease been signed?" asked César.

"Yesterday, before a notary," Ragon replied. "He has ...n the place for eighteen years, but he pays the rent six ...ths in advance."

"Well, M. Ragon, are you satisfied with me?" Birotteau ...ed. "I have given him the secret of a new discovery—...act!"

"We know you by heart, César," said little Ragon, taking ...sar's hands, and pressing them with devout friendliness.

Roguin meanwhile was not without inward qualms. Cla-...ron was about to appear on the scene, and his habits and ...ner of talking might be something of a shock to these ...table citizens. He thought it necessary to prepare their ...ds, and spoke, addressing Ragon, Pillerault, and the ...en.

"You will see an eccentric character," he said; "he hides ... talents beneath shocking bad manners; his ideas have ...d him from a very low position. No doubt he will ...e better tastes in the society of bankers. You might ... across him slouching half-fuddled along the boulevard, ... a café playing at billiards; he looks like a great hulking ... But nothing of the kind; he is thinking all the time, ...ing how to put life into trade by new ideas."

"I can understand that," said Birotteau; "my best ideas ... to me while I was sauntering about, didn't they, dear?"

"Claparon makes up for lost time at night, after spending the daytime in meditating over business combinations. All these very clever people lead queer inexplicable lives," Roguin continued. "Well, with all his desultory ways, he gains his end, as I can testify. He made all the owners of our building land give way at last; they were not willing, they demurred at this and that; he mystified them—tired them out; day after day he went to see them, and this time the lots are ours."

A peculiar sounding *broum! broum!* characteristic of drinkers of strong waters and spirits, announced the arrival of the most grotesque personage in this story—who was in the future to enact the part of the arbiter of César's destinies. The perfumer hurried down the narrow, dark staircase, partly to tell Raguet to close the shop, partly to make his excuses for receiving Claparon in the dining-room.

"Eh, what? Oh, it will do very well for stowing the viet——, I mean for doing business in."

In spite of Roguin's skilful opening, the entrance of the sham great banker at once produced an unpleasant impression upon those well-bred citizens, M. and Mme. Ragon, upon the observant Pillerault, and upon Césarine and her mother.

At the age of twenty-eight, or thereabouts, the former commercial traveler had not a hair on his head, and wore a wig of corkscrew curls. Such a manner of dressing the hair demands a girlish freshness, a milk-white skin, and the daintiest feminine charm; so it brought out all the vulgarity of a pimpled countenance, a dark-red complexion, flushed like that of a stage coachman, and covered with premature wrinkles and deeply cut grotesque lines which told of a dissolute life: its ill effects could be read only too plainly in the bad state of his teeth and the black specks dotted over the shriveled skin.

There was something about Claparon that suggested the provincial actor who frequents fairs, and is prepared to play any and every part, to whose worn, shrunken cheeks and

by lips the paint refuses to adhere; the tongue always ing even when the man is drunk; the shameless eyes, compromising gestures. Such a face as this, lighted by the hilarious flames of punch, little befitted a man accumed to important business. Indeed, only after prod and necessary studies in mimicry had Claparon sucd in adopting a manner not wholly out of keeping with pposed importance. Du Tillet had assisted personally aparon's toilette, anxious as a nervous manager over rst appearance of his principal actor, for he trembled the vicious habits of a reckless life should appear gh the veneer of the banker.

"Say as little as you can," said his mentor; "a banker r babbles; he acts, thinks, meditates, listens, and pon- So, to look like a real banker, you must either not at all, or say insignificant things. Keep those ribald of yours quiet; look solemn at the risk of looking stupid. olitics, be for the Government, but keep to generalities, as—'There is a heavy budget; compromise as parties is out of the question; Liberalism is dangerous; the ons ought to avoid all collisions; Liberalism is a cloak the schemes of the Coalition; the Bourbons are inating an epoch of prosperity, so let us give them our rt, whether we are well affected to them or not; France d enough of political experiments,' and the like. And sprawl over all the tables; remember that you have to in the dignity of a millionaire. Don't snort like a pen- when you take snuff; play with your snuff-box, and t your boots or at the ceiling before you give an answer; as wise as you can, in fact. Above all things, rid yourf your unlucky habit of fingering everything. In so- banker ought to look as if he were glad to let his rest. And look here! you work at night, you are with making calculations, there are so many things nsider in the starting of an enterprise! so much think- involved! Grumble, above all things, and say that very bad. Trade is dull, slow, hard to move, per-

plexing. Keep to that, and let particulars alone. Don't begin to sing drolleries of Béranger's at table, and don't drink too much; you will ruin your prospects if you get tipsy. Roguin will keep an eye on you; you are going among moral people, respectable, steady-going folk, don't frighten them by letting out some of your pot-house principles."

This homily produced on Charles Claparon's mind an effect very similar to the strange sensation of his new suit of clothes. The rollicking prodigal, hail-fellow-well-met with everybody, accustomed to the comfortable, disreputable garments in which his outer man was as much at home as his thoughts in the language that clothed them, held himself upright, stiff as a poker in the new clothes for which the tailor had kept him waiting to the last minute, and was as ill at ease in his movements as in this new phraseology. He put out a hand unthinkingly towards a flask or a box, then, hurriedly recollecting himself, drew it in again, and in the same way he began a sentence and stopped short in the middle, distinguishing himself by a ludicrous incoherence, which did not escape the observant Pillerault. His round face, like the rakish-looking corkscrew ringlets of his wig, were totally out of keeping with his manner, and he seemed to think one thing and say another. But the good folk concluded that his inconsequence was the result of preoccupation.

"He does so much business," said Roguin.

"Business has given him very little breeding," Mme. Ragon said to Césarine.

M. Roguin overheard her, and laid a finger on his lips. "He is rich, clever, and honorable to a fault," he said, bending to Mme. Ragon.

"He may be excused something for such qualities as those," said Pillerault to Ragon.

"Let us read over the papers before dinner," said Roguin. "We are alone."

Mme. Ragon, Césarine, and Constance left the contracting parties, Pillerault, Ragon, César, Roguin, and Claparon,

listen to the reading of the documents by Alexandre Crot-
César signed a mortgage bond for forty thousand francs
ared on the land and the factory in the Faubourg du Temple (the money had been lent by one of Roguin's clients); paid over to Roguin Pillerault's order on the bank, gave thout taking a receipt) twenty thousand francs worth of bills from his portfolio, and drew another bill for the remaining hundred and forty thousand francs on Charles Claparon.

"I have no receipt to give you," said that gentleman. "You are acting for your own side with M. Roguin, as we doing for our share. Our vendors will receive their money from him in coin; I only undertake to complete your investment by paying a hundred and forty thousand francs for your bills——"

"That is right," said Pillerault.

"Well, then, gentlemen, let us call in the ladies again, for it is cold without them," said Claparon, with a look at Roguin to see whether he had gone too far.

"Ladies! . . . Ah! mademoiselle is your young lady, of course," said Claparon, looking at Birotteau, and straightening himself up. "Well, well, you are not a bungler. Not one of the roses that you have distilled can be compared with her, and perhaps it is because you have distilled roses ..."

"Faith!" said Roguin, interrupting him, "I own that I am hungry."

"Very well, let us have dinner," said Birotteau.

"We are to have dinner in the presence of a notary," said Claparon, with an important air.

"You do a great deal of business, do you not?" said Pillerault, purposely seating himself next to the banker.

"A tremendous amount, wholesale," replied Claparon; "but trade is dull, hard to move—there are canals now. Oh, ...! You have no idea how busy we are with canals. ... comprehensible. The Government wants canals. A ... is a want generally felt. All the trade of a depart-

ment is interested in a canal, you know! A stream, said Pascal, is a moving highway. The next thing is a market, and markets depend on embankments, for there are a frightful lot of embankments, and the embankments interest the poorer classes, and that means a loan, which finally benefits the poor! Voltaire said, *'Canal, canard, canaille!'* But Government depends for information on its own engineers; it is difficult to meddle in the matter, at least, it is difficult to come to an understanding with them; for the Chamber —— Oh! sir, the Chamber gives us trouble! The Chamber does not want to grapple with the political question hidden beneath the financial question. There is bad faith on all sides. Would you believe this? There are the Kellers—well, then, Francois Keller is a public speaker, he attacks the measures of the Government as to the funds and canals. He comes home, and then my fine gentleman finds us with our propositions; they are favorable, and he has to make it up with the aforesaid Government, which he attacked so insolently an hour ago. The interests of the public speaker clash with the interests of the banker; we are between two fires. Now you understand how thorny affairs become; you have to satisfy everybody—the clerks, the people in the chambers, and the people in the ante-chambers, and the Ministers——"

"The Ministers?" asked Pillerault, who wished to probe this partner's mind thoroughly.

"Yes, sir, the Ministers."

"Well, then, the newspapers are right," said Pillerault.

"Here is uncle on politics," said Birotteau; "M. Claparon has set him off."

"Newspapers!" said Claparon, "there are some more confounded humbugs! Newspapers throw us all into confusion; they do us a good turn now and then, but the cruel nights they make me spend! I would as lief be without them; they are the ruin of my eyes in fact, poring over them and working out calculations."

"But to return to the Ministers," said Pillerault, hoping for revelations.

"Ministers have exigencies which are purely governmental. But what am I eating; is it ambrosia?" asked Claparon, interrupting himself. "Here is a sort of sauce that you only have in citizens' houses; you never get it at grub-shops— —"

At that word, the ornaments on Mme. Ragon's cap skipped like rams. Claparon gathered that the expression was low, and tried to retrieve his error.

"That is what the heads of large banking firms call the high-class taverns—Véry, and the Frères Provençaux. Well, neither those vile grub-shops, nor our most accomplished cooks, make you a soft, mellow sauce; some give you water with lemon-juice in it, and others give you chemical concoctions."

The conversation at dinner chiefly consisted in attacks from Pillerault, who tried to plumb his man, and only found emptiness; he looked upon him as a dangerous person.

"It is going on all right," said Roguin in Charles Claparon's ear.

"Oh! I shall get out of my clothes to-night, I suppose," answered Claparon, who was gasping for breath.

"We are obliged to use our dining-room as a sitting-room, sir," said Birotteau, "because we are looking forward to a little gathering of our friends in eighteen days' time, partly to celebrate the liberation of the soil——"

"Right, sir; I myself am also for the Government. My political convictions incline me to the *statu quo* of the great man who guides the destinies of the house of Austria, a fine fellow! Keep what you have, to get more; and, in the first place, get more, to keep what you have.—So now you know the bottom of my opinions, which have the honor to be those of Prince Metternich!"

"Partly on the occasion of my promotion to the Order of the Legion of Honor," César went on.

"Why, yes, I know. Now who was telling me about that? Was it the Kellers, or Nucingen?"

Roguin, amazed at so much presence of mind, signified his admiration.

"Oh, no; it was at the Chamber."

"At the Chamber. Was it M. de la Billardière?" asked César.

"The very man."

"He is charming," said César, [illegible] his uncle.

"He pours out talk, talk, talk! [illegible] you are drowned in talk," said Popinot.

"It may be," resumed Birotteau, "that I have shown myself worthy of his favor."

"By your achievements in perfumery; the Bourbons know how to reward merit of every kind. Ah! let us stand by our generous legitimate Princes, to whom we shall owe unheard-of prosperity about to be. For, you may be sure of it, the Restoration feels that she must enter the lists with the Empire, and the Restoration will make peaceful conquests; you will see conquests! [illegible]"

"You will no doubt honor us by coming to our ball, sir," said Mme. César.

"To spend an evening with you, madame, I would miss a chance of making millions."

"He certainly is a babbler," said César in his uncle's ear.

While the waning glory of the *Queen of Roses* was about to shed abroad its parting rays, a faint star was rising above the commercial horizon; at that very hour, little Popinot was laying the foundations of his fortune in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants. The Rue des Cinq-Diamants, a short, narrow thoroughfare, where loaded wagons can scarcely pass each other, runs between the Rue des Lombards and the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, into which it opens just opposite the end of the Rue Quincampoix, that street so famous in the history of France and of old Paris.

In spite of this narrowness, the near neighborhood of the druggists' quarter made the place convenient; and from that point of view, Popinot had not made a bad choice. The house (the second from the end nearest the Rue des Lom-

rd-) was so dark, that at times it was necessary to work artificial light in the daytime. Popinot had taken possion the evening before of all its darkest and most unory recesses. His predecessor, a dealer in treacle and sugars, had left his mark on the place; the walls, the rd, and the storehouse bore unmistakable traces of his pation.

Imagine a large and roomy shop, and huge doors barred iron and painted dragon-green, the solid iron scroll- . with bolt heads as large as mushrooms by way of nament. The shop was adorned and protected, as bakers' ps used o be, by wire-work lattices, which bulged at the ottom, and was paved with great slabs of white stone, racked for the most part. The walls of a guard-house are yellower nor barer. Further on came the back-shop and tchen, which looked out into the yard; and behind these ain a second storeroom, which must at one time have been stable. An inside staircase had been contrived in the back-hop, by which you gained two rooms that looked out upon the t; here Popinot meant to have his counting-house and ledgers. Above the warehouse there were three small ms, all backed against the party-wall, and lighted by windows on the side of the yard. It was in these dilapidated ooms that Popinot proposed to live.

The view from the windows was shut in by the high walls hat rose about the dingy, crooked yard, walls so damp that en in the driest weather they looked as if they had been newly distempered. The cracks in the paving-stones were oked with black, malodorous filth, deposited there during tenancy of the dealer in treacle and raw sugars. So ch for the outlook. As to the rooms themselves, only of them boasted a fireplace; the floors were of brick, the lls were unpapered.

Gaudissart and Popinot had been busy there ever since morning, putting up a cheap wall-paper with their own nds in the ugly room; a journeyman paperhanger whom udissart ferreted out had varnished it for them. The

furniture consisted of a student's mattress, a wooden bedstead painted red, a rickety nightstand, a venerable chest of drawers, a table, a couple of armchairs, and half-a-dozen ordinary chairs, a present from Popinot the judge to his nephew. Gaudissart had put a cheap pier-glass over the chimney-piece. It was almost eight o'clock in the evening, and the two friends, sitting before a blazing fire, were about to discuss the remains of their breakfast.

"Away with the cold mutton! It is out of character in a house-warming," cried Gaudissart.

Popinot held up his last twenty-franc piece, which was to pay for the prospectus. "But I——" he began.

"I? . . ." retorted Gaudissart, sticking a forty-franc piece into his eye.

A knock at the street door reverberated through the yard. It was Sunday, the workpeople were taking their holiday away from their workshops, and the idle echoes greeted every sound.

"There is my trusty man from the Rue de la Poterie," Gaudissart went on. "For my own part, it is not simply 'I,' but 'I have.'"

And, in fact, a waiter appeared, followed by two kitchen boys, carrying between them three wicker baskets, containing a dinner, and crowned by six bottles of wine selected with discrimination.

"But how are we to eat such a lot of things?" asked Popinot.

"There is the man of letters," cried Gaudissart. "Finot understands the pomps and vanities. The artless youth will be here directly with a prospectus fit to make your hair stand on end (neat that, eh?), and prospectuses are always dry work. You must water the seeds if you mean to have flowers.—Here, minions," he added, striking an attitude for the benefit of the kitchen-boys, "here's gold for you."

He held out six sous with a gesture worthy of his idol, Napoleon.

"Thank you, M. Gaudissart," said the scullions, more pleased with the joke than with the money.

"As for thee, my son," he continued, turning to the waiter who remained, "there is a portress here. She crouches in the depths of a cave, where at times she does some cooking, as erewhile Nausicaa did the washing, simply by way of relaxation. Hie thee to her, work on her trustful nature; interest her, young man, in the temperature of thy hot dishes. Say to her that she shall be blessed, and above all things respected, highly respected, by Felix Gaudissart, son of Jean-François Gaudissart, and grandson of Gaudissart, vile proletaries of remote lineage, his ancestors. Off with you, and act in such a sort that everything shall be good; for if it isn't, I will make you laugh on the wrong side of your face."

There was another knock at the door.

"That is the ingenious Andoche," said Gaudissart.

A stout young fellow suddenly entered. He had somewhat chubby cheeks, was of middle height, and from head to [illegible] looked like the hatter's son. A certain shrewdness lurked beneath the air of constraint that sat on his rounded features. The habitual dejection of a man who is tired of poverty left him, and a hilarious expression crossed his countenance, at the sight of the preparations on the table and the significant seals on the bottle-corks. At Gaudissart's shout, a twinkle came into the pale-blue eyes, the big head, on which a Kalmuck physiognomy had been carved, rolled from side to side, and he gave Popinot a distant greeting, in which there was neither servility nor respect, like a man who feels out of his element and stands on his dignity.

Finot was just beginning to discover that he had no sort of talent for literature; he did not think of quitting his calling: he meant to exploit literature by raising himself on the shoulders of men who possessed the talent which he lacked. Instead of doing ill-paid work himself, he would turn his business capacities to account. He was just at the turning-point; he had exhausted the expedients of humility;

he had experienced to the full the humiliation of failure; and, like those who take a wide outlook over the financial world, he resolved to change his tactics, and to be insolent in future. He needed capital in the first instance, and Gaudissart had opened out a prospect of making the money by putting Popinot's oil before the public.

"You will make his arrangements with the newspapers," Gaudissart had said, "but don't swindle him; if you do, there will be a duel to the death between us; give him value for his money!"

Popinot looked uneasily at the "author." Your true man of business regards an author with mixed feelings, in which alarm and curiosity are blended with compassion; and though Popinot had been well educated, his relations' attitude of mind and ways of thinking, together with a course of drudgery in a shop, had produced their effect on his intelligence, and he bent beneath the yoke of use and wont. You can see this by noticing the metamorphoses which ten years will effect among a hundred boys, who when they left school or college were almost exactly alike.

Andoche mistook the impression which he had made for admiration.

"Very well. Let us run through the prospectus before dinner, then it will be off our minds, and we can drink," said Gaudissart. "It is uncomfortable to read after dinner; the tongue is digesting too."

"Sir," said Popinot, "a prospectus often means a whole fortune."

"And for nobodies like me," said Andoche, "fortune is nothing but a prospectus."

"Ah! very good," said Gaudissart. "That droll fellow of an Andoche has wit enough for the Forty."

"For a hundred," said Popinot, awestruck with the idea.

Gaudissart snatched up the manuscript, and read aloud, and with emphasis, the first two words—"Cephalic Oil!"

"I like Cesarian Oil better," said Popinot.

"You don't know them in the provinces, my friend," said

Gaudissart. "There is a surgical operation known by that name, and they are so stupid, that they will think your oil is meant to facilitate childbirth; and if they start off with the notion, it would be too hard work to bring them all the way back to hair again."

"Without defending the name," observed the author, "I would call your attention to the fact that Cephalic Oil means oil for the head, and resumes your ideas."

"Go on!" said Popinot impatiently.

And here follows a second historical document, a prospectus, which even at this day is circulating by thousands among retail perfumers.

GOLD MEDAL, PARIS 1824*

CEPHALIC OIL

(Improved Patent).

No cosmetic can make the hair grow; and in the same way, it cannot be dyed by chemical preparations without danger to the seat of the intelligence. Science has recently proclaimed that the hair is not a living substance, and that there is no means of preventing it from blanching or falling out. To prevent xerasia and baldness, the bulb at the roots should be preserved from all atmospheric influences, and the natural temperature of the head evenly maintained. The "Cephalic Oil," based on these principles established by the Royal Academy of Sciences, induces the important result so highly prized by the ancients, the Romans and Greeks, and the nations of the North—a fine head of hair. Learned research has brought to light the fact that the nobles of olden times, who were distinguished by their long, flowing locks, used no other means than these; their recipe, long lost, has been ingeniously rediscovered by A. POPINOT, inventor of "Cephalic Oil."

To preserve the glands, and not to provoke an impossible or hurtful stimulation of the dermis which contains them, is, therefore, the

* The next "Quinquennial Exhibition."

function of "Cephalic Oil." This oil, which exhales a delicious fragrance, prevents the exfoliation of the pellicle; while the substances of which it is composed (the essential oil of the hazel-nut being the principal element) counteract the effects of atmospheric air upon the head, thus preventing chills, catarrh, and all unpleasant encephalic affections by maintaining the natural temperature. In this manner the glands, which contain the hair-producing secretions, are never attacked by heat or cold. A fine head of hair—that glorious product so highly valued by either sex—may be retained to extreme old age by the use of "Cephalic Oil," which imparts to the hair the brilliancy, silkiness, and gloss which constitutes the charm of children's heads.

Directions for use are issued on the wrapper of every bottle.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

It is perfectly useless to apply oil to the hair itself: besides being an absurd superstition, it is an obnoxious practice, for the cosmetic leaves its traces everywhere.

It is only necessary to part the hair with a comb, and to apply the oil to the roots every morning with a small sponge, proceeding thus until the whole surface of the skin has received a slight application, the hair having been previously combed and brushed.

To prevent spurious imitations, each bottle bears the signature of the inventor. Sold at the price of THREE FRANCS by A. POPINOT, Rue des Cinq-Diamants, Quartier des Lombards, Paris.

It is particularly requested that all communications by post should be prepaid.

NOTE.—A. POPINOT also supplies essences and pharmaceutical preparations, such as neroli, oil of spike-lavender, oil of sweet almonds, cacao-butter, cafeine, castor oil, "et cetera."

"My dear fellow," said the Illustrious Gaudissart, addressing Finot, "it is perfectly written! Ye gods, how we plunge into deep science! No shuffling; we go straight to the point! Ah! I congratulate you heartily; there is literature of some practical use!"

"A fine prospectus!" cried Popinot enthusiastically.

"The very first sentence is a deathblow to Macassar," said Gaudissart, rising to his feet with a magisterial air, to pro-

claim with an oratorical gesture between each word, "'You—cannot—make—hair—grow. It—cannot—be—dyed—without—danger!' Aha! success lies in that. Modern science corroborates the custom of the ancients. You can suit yourself to old and young. You have to do with an old man.—Aha, sir! the Greeks and Romans, the ancients, were in the right; they were not such fools as some would make them out to be! Or if it is a young man.—My dear fellow, another discovery due to the progress of enlightenment; we are progressing. What must we not expect from steam, and the telegraph, and such like inventions? This oil is the outcome of M. Vauquelin's investigations!—How if we were to print an extract from M. Vauquelin's paper, eh? Capital! Come, Finot, draw up your chair! Let us stow the victuals, and tipple down the champagne to our young friend's success!"

"It seemed to me," said the author modestly, "that the time for the light and playful prospectus has gone by; we are entering on an epoch of science, and must talk learnedly and authoritatively to make an impression on the public."

"We will push the oil. My feet, and my tongue too, are hankering to go. I have agencies for all the houses that deal in hairdressers' goods, not one of them gives more than thirty per cent of discount; make up your mind to give forty, and I will engage to sell a hundred thousand bottles in six months. I will make a set on all the druggists, grocers, and hairdressers! And if you will allow them forty per cent on your oil, they will all send their customers wild for it."

The three young men ate like lions, drank like Swiss, and waxed merry over the future success of the Cephalic Oil.

"This oil goes to your head," said Finot, smiling, and Gaudissart exhausted whole series of puns on the words, oil, head, and hair.

In the midst of their Homeric laughter over the dessert, the knocker sounded, and in spite of the toasts and the wishes for luck exchanged among the three friends, they heard it.

"It is my uncle! He is capable of coming to see me," cried Popinot.

"An uncle?" asked Finot, "and we have not a glass!"

"My friend Popinot's uncle is an examining magistrate," said Gaudissart, by way of reply to Finot; "there is no occasion to hoax him, he saved my life. Ah! if you had found yourself in the fix I was in, with the scaffold staring you in the face, where, *konik*, off goes your hair for good!" (and he imitated the fatal knife by a gesture), "you would be apt to remember the righteous judge to whom you owe the preservation of the channel that the champagne goes down! You would remember him if you were dead drunk. You don't know, Finot, but what you may want M. Popinot one day. *Saquerlotte!* You must make your bow to him, and thirteen to the dozen!"

It was, as a matter of fact, the "righteous judge," who was asking for his nephew of the woman who opened the door. Anselme recognized the voice, and went down, candle in hand, to light his way.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," said the magistrate.

The Illustrious Gaudissart made a profound bow. Finot looked the newcomer over with drunken eyes, and decided that Popinot's uncle was tolerably woodenheaded.

"There is no luxury here," said the judge, gravely looking round the room; "but, my boy, you must begin by being nothing if you are to be something great."

"How profound he is!" said Gaudissart, turning to Finot.

"An idea for an article," said the journalist.

"Oh! is that you, sir?" said the judge, recognizing the commercial traveler. "Eh! what are you doing here?"

"I want to do all my little part, sir, towards making your dear nephew's fortune. We have just been pondering over the prospectus for this oil of his, and this gentleman here is the author of the prospectus, which seems to us to be one of the finest things in the literature of periwigs."

The judge looked at Finot.

"This gentleman is M. Andoche Finot," Gaudissart said,

... of the most distinguished young men in literature; he ... es political leaders and the minor theatres for the Government newspapers; he is a Minister who is by way of being an author."

Here Finot tugged at Gaudissart's coat-tails.

"Very well, boys," said the judge, to whom these words explained the appearance of the table covered with the remnants of a feast very excusable under the circumstances.

"As for you, Anselme," he continued, turning to Popinot, "get ready to pay a visit to M. Birotteau; I must go to see him this evening. You will sign your deed of partnership; I have gone through it very carefully. As you are going to manufacture your oil in the Faubourg du Temple, I think that he ought to make over the lease of the workshop to you, and that he has power to sublet; if things are all in order, it will save disputes afterwards. These walls look to me to be very damp, Anselme; bring up trusses of straw, and put them round about where your bed stands."

"Excuse me, sir," said Gaudissart with a courtier's suppleness, "we have just put up the wall-paper ourselves to-day, and—it—is—not quite dry."

"Economy! good!" said the judge.

"Listen," said Gaudissart in Finot's ear; "my friend Popinot is a good young man; he is going off with his uncle, so come along and let us finish the evening with our fair cousins."

The journalist turned out the lining of his waistcoat pocket. Popinot saw the manœuvre, and slipped a twenty-franc piece into the hand of the author of his prospectus. The judge had a cab waiting at the corner of the street, and carried off his nephew to call on Birotteau.

Pillerault, M. and Mme. Ragon, and Roguin were playing at boston, and Césarine was embroidering a fichu, when the elder Popinot and Anselme appeared. Roguin, sitting opposite Mme. Ragon, could watch Césarine, who sat by her side, and saw the happy look on the girl's face when Anselme came in, saw her flush up red as a pomegranate

flower, and called his head-clerk's attention to her by a significant gesture.

"So this is to be a day of deeds, is it?" said the perfumer, when greetings had been exchanged, and the judge explained the reason of the visit.

César, Anselme, and the judge went up to the perfumer's temporary quarters on the second floor to debate the matter of the lease and the deed of partnership drawn up by the elder Popinot. It was arranged that the lease should run for eighteen years, so as to be conterminous with the lease of the house in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants; trifling matter as it appeared at the time, it was destined later to serve Birotteau's interests.

When they returned to the sitting-room, the elder Popinot, surprised by the confusion and the men at work on a Sunday in the house of so devout a man, asked the reason of it all. This was the question for which César was waiting.

"Although you are not worldly, sir, you will not object to our celebrating our deliverance; and that is not all—if we are arranging for a little gathering of our friends, it is partly also to celebrate my promotion to the order of the Legion of Honor."

"Ah!" said the examining magistrate (who had not been decorated).

"It may be that I have shown myself not unworthy of this signal mark of Royal favor by discharging my functions at the Tribunal . . . oh! I mean to say Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for the Royalist cause on the steps——"

"Yes," said the magistrate.

"Steps of Saint-Roch, on the 13th of Vendémiaire, where I was wounded by Napoleon."

"I shall be glad to come," said M. Popinot; "and if my wife is well enough, I will bring her."

"Xandrot," said Roguin, on the doorstep, "give up all

thoughts of marrying Césarine; in six weeks' time you will see that I have given you sound counsel."

"Why?" asked Crottat.

"My dear fellow, Birotteau is about to spend a hundred thousand francs over this ball of his, and he is embarking his whole fortune, against my advice, in this building-land scheme. In six weeks' time these people will not have bread to eat. Marry Mlle. Lourdois, the house-painter's daughter; she has three hundred thousand francs to her fortune. I have planned this shift for you. If you will pay me down the money, you can have my practice to-morrow for a hundred thousand francs."

The splendors of the perfumer's forthcoming ball, announced to Europe by the newspapers, were very differently announced in commercial circles by flying rumors of workpeople employed night and day on the perfumer's house. The rumors took various forms; here is was said that César had taken the house on either side; there, that his drawing-rooms were to be gilded; some said that no tradespeople would be invited, and that the ball was given to Government officials only; and the perfumer was severely blamed for his ambition; they scoffed at his political aspirations, they denied that he had been wounded! More than one scheme was set on foot, in the second arrondissement, in consequence of the ball; the friends of the family took things quietly, but the claims of distant acquaintances were vast.

Those who have favor to bestow, never lack courtiers; and a goodly number of the guests were at no little pains to procure their cards of admission. The Birotteaus were amazed to find so many friends whose existence they had not suspected. This eagerness on their part alarmed Mme. Birotteau; she looked more and more gloomy as the days went by and the solemn festival came nearer. She had confessed to César from the very first that she should not know how to act her part as hostess, and the innumerable small details frightened her. Where was the plate to come from?

How about the glass, the refreshments, the forks and spoons? And who would look after it all?—She begged Birotteau to stand near the door and see that no one came who had not been asked to the ball; she had heard strange things about people who came to dances claiming acquaintance with people whom they did not know by name.

One evening, ten days before the famous Sunday, Messieurs Braschon, Grindot, Lourdois, and Chaffaroux the contractor having given their word that the rooms should be ready for the 17th of December, there had been a laughable conference after dinner in the humble little sitting-room on the mezzanine floor—César and his wife and daughter were making a list of guests and writing the cards of invitation, which had been sent in only that morning, nicely printed in the English fashion on rose-colored paper, in accordance with the precepts laid down in the *Complete Guide to Etiquette*.

"Look here!" said César; "we must not leave anybody out."

"If we forget any one," remarked Constance, "we shall be reminded of it. Mme. Derville, who never called upon us before, sailed in yesterday evening in great state."

"She was very pretty; I liked her," said Césarine.

"Yet before she was married she was even worse off than I," said Constance; "she used to do plain needlework in the Rue Montmartre; she has made shirts for your father."

"Well, let us put the great people down at the top of the list," said César. "Write 'M. le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse de Lenoncourt,' Césarine."

"Goodness! César," cried Constance, "pray don't begin to send invitations to people whom you only know through the business. Are you going to ask the Princesse de Blamont-Chauvry? She is more nearly related to your late godmother, the Marquise d'Uxelles, than even the Duc de Lenoncourt. And shall you ask the two MM. Vandenesse, M. de Marsay, M. de Ronquerolles, M. d'Aiglemont; in short all your customers? You are mad; honors are turning your head——"

"Yes! but M. le Comte de Fontaine and his family. Eh? used to come to the *Queen of Roses* under the name of *and-Jacques* with the *Ga* (M le Marquis de Montauran t was) and M. de la Billardière, whom they called the *ulais* in the days before the great affair of the 13th of lémiaire. And they would shake hands with you then, it was, 'My dear Birotteau, keep your heart up, and your life, like the rest of us, for the good cause!' We old fellow-conspirators."

"Put him down," said Constance; "if M. de la Billardière and his son are coming, they must have somebody to speak to."

"Set down his name, Césarine," said Birotteau.—"*Im-is,* His Worship the Prefect of the Seine; he may or not come, but he is the head of the municipal corporation, and 'honor to whom honor is due.'—M. de la Billardière, the mayor, and his son. (Write down the number the people after every name.)—My colleague, M. Granet, his wife. She is very ugly, but, all the same, we can-cave her out.—M. Curel, the goldsmith, Colonel of the tional Guard, and his wife and two daughters. Those what I call the authorities. Now for the bigwigs!—M le Comte and Mme. la Comtesse de Fontaine and their ghter, Mlle. Émilie de Fontaine."

"An insolent girl, who makes me come out of the shop eak to her at her carriage door in all weathers," said Mme. César. "If she comes at all, it will be to make fun us."

"In that case, perhaps she will come," said César, who nt to fill his rooms at all costs. "Go on, Césarine—le Comte and Mme. la Comtesse de Granville, my land-the hardest head in the Court of Appeal, Derville —Oh! by the by, M. de la Billardière has arranged for to be presented to-morrow by M. le Comte de Lacépède elf; it is only polite to ask the Grand Chancellor to and to the ball.—M. Vauquelin. Put him down for dinner and for the ball too, Césarine. And, while we

remember it, all the Chiffrevilles and the Protez family. —M. Popinot, judge of the Tribunal of the Seine, and Mme. Popinot. M. and Mme. Thirion, he is an usher of the Privy Chamber, and a friend of the Ragons; it is said that their daughter is to be married to one of M. Camusot's sons by his first marriage."

"César, do not forget young Horace Bianchon; he is M. Popinot's nephew and Anselme's cousin," put in Constance.

"Ah, to be sure! Césarine has put a figure four very plainly after the Popinots.—M. and Mme. Rabourdin; M. Rabourdin is at the head of one of the departments in M. de la Billardière's division.—M. Cochin of the same department, and his wife and son; they are sleeping-partners in M. Matifat's concern: and while we are about it, put down M. and Mme. and Mlle. Matifat."

"The Matifats have been making overtures for their friends, M. and Mme. Colleville, M. and Mme. Thuillier, and the Saillards."

"We shall see," said César. "Our stockbroker, M. Jules Desmarets and his wife."

"She will be the prettiest woman in the room!" cried Césarine. "I like her, oh! more than any one!"

"Derville and his wife."

"Just put down M. and Mme. Coquelin, who took over uncle Pillerault's business," said Constance. "They made so sure of being asked, that the poor little thing is having a grand ball-dress made by my dressmaker—a white satin overskirt covered with tulle, embroidered with blue chicory flowers. It would not have taken much to persuade her to have a gold embroidered court-dress. If we left them out, we should make two bitter enemies."

"Put them down, Césarine; we must show our respect for trade, for we are tradespeople ourselves.—M. and Mme. Roguin."

"Mamma, Mme. Roguin will wear her *rivière*, all her diamonds, and her Mechlin lace gown."

"M. and Mme. Lebas," César continued.—"And next,

President of the Tribunal of Commerce and his wife two daughters (I forgot to put them among the authori-).—M. and Mme. Lourdois and their daughter.—M. Claparon the banker; M. du Tillet, M. Grindot, M. Molineux; Pillerault and his landlord; M. and Mme. Camu-, the rich silk mercer, and all their family, the one at the polytechnique and the advocate; he will receive an ntment as judge—he is the one that is engaged to be rried to Mlle. Thirion."

"It will only be a Provincial appointment," said Césarine.

"M. Cardot, Camusot's father-in-law, and all the young rdots. Stay! there are the Guillaumes in the Rue du Colombier, Lebas' wife's people, two old folk who will be flowers.—Alexandre Crottat.—Célestin——"

"Papa, do not forget M. Andoche Finot and M. Gaudis-t, two young men who have been so useful to M. Anselme."

"Gaudissart? He got himself into trouble. But, never ind, he is going away in a few days, and will travel for oil,—so put him down! As for Master Andoche Finot, at is he to us?"

"M. Anselme says that he will be a great man; he is clever as Voltaire."

"An author is he? They are all of them atheists."

"Put him down, papa; so far there are not so very many n who dance. Besides, your nice prospectus for the oil his doing."

"He believes in our oil, does he?" said César. "Put him vn, dear child."

"So I too have my protégés on the list," commented rine.

"Put M. Mitral, my process-server, and our doctor, M. Haudry; it is for form's sake, he will not come.

"He will come for his game of cards," said Césarine.

"Ah! by the by, César, I hope that you will ask M. l'Abbé aux to dinner!"

"I have written to him already," said César.

"Oh! we must not forget Lebas' sister-in-law, Mme. Au-

gustine de Sommervieux," said Césarine. "Poor little thing! she is very unwell; Lebas said that she was dying of grief."

"See what comes of marrying an artist," cried the perfumer.—"Just look at your mother; she has fallen asleep," he said, in a low voice, to his daughter. "Bye-bye—sleep softly, Madame César.—Well, now," said César, turning to his daughter, "how about your mother's dress?"

"Yes, papa, everything will be ready. Mamma thinks that she is to have a Canton crape gown like mine, and the dressmaker is sure that there is no need to try it on."

"How many are there altogether?" César went on aloud, as his wife opened her eyes.

"A hundred and nine, with the assistants," said Césarine.

"Where are we going to put all those people?" asked Mme. Birotteau. "And when all is over, after the Sunday comes Monday," she said naïvely.

Nothing can be done simply when people aspire to rise from one social rank to another. Neither Mme. Birotteau, nor César, nor any one else might venture on any pretext whatsoever on to the first floor. César had promised the errand-boy Raguet a new suit of clothes if he kept watch faithfully and carried out his orders properly. Like the Emperor Napoleon at Compiègne, when he had the Château restored for his marriage with Marie-Louise of Austria, Birotteau wanted to see nothing till the whole was finished; he meant to enjoy "the surprise." So all unconsciously the old enemies met, this time not on the field of battle, but on the common ground of bourgeois vanity. M. Grindot was to take César over the new rooms like a cicerone exhibiting a gallery to a tourist.

Every one in the house, moreover, had his or her own "surprise." Césarine, the dear child, had spent a hundred louis, all her little hoard, on books for her father. M. Grindot had confided to her one morning that there were two fitted bookcases in her father's room, which was to be a study; this was the architect's surprise; and Césarine spent all her

sa 's with a bookseller. She had bought the works of Bossuet, Racine, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Molière, Buffon, Fénelon, Delille, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, La Fontaine, Corneille, Pascal, and La Harpe; in short, the ordinary collection of classics to be seen everywhere, books which her father would never read. A terrible bookbinder's bill must of necessity be the result. Thouvenin, that great and unpunctual artist and binder, had undertaken to send the books home on the 18th at midday. Césarine had told her uncle in confidence of her difficulty, and he had undertaken the bill. César's surprise for his wife took the shape of a cherry-colored velvet gown trimmed with lace; it was of this dress that he had just spoken to the daughter, who had been his accomplice. Mme. Birotteau's surprise for the new Chevalier of Honor consisted of a pair of gold buckles and a solitaire pin. Finally, there was the surprise of the new rooms for the whole family, to be followed in a fortnight by the great surprise of the bills to be paid.

After mature reflection, César decided that some of the invitations must be given in person, and some might be delivered by Raguet in the evening. He took a cab and handed his wife into it (his wife, whose beauty suffered a temporary eclipse from a hat and feathers and the last new shawl, the cashmere shawl for which she had longed for fifteen years), and away went the perfumers dressed in their best to acquit themselves of twenty-two calls in a morning.

César spared his wife the difficulties attendant on straining the resources of a bourgeois household to prepare the various confections which the splendor of the occasion demanded. A treaty was arranged between Birotteau and the great Chevet. Chevet would furnish the dinner and the wines; he would provide a splendid service of plate (which brings in as much as an estate to its owner), and a retinue of servants under the command of a sufficiently imposing *maître d'hôtel,* all of them responsible for their sayings and doings. Chevet was to take up his quarters in the kitchen

and dining-room on the mezzanine floor, and not to quit possession until he had served up a dinner for twenty persons at six o'clock, and a grand collation an hour after midnight. The ices, to be served in pretty cups with silver-gilt spoons on silver trays, would be supplied by Foy's Café, and the refreshments by Tanrade—an added lustre to the feast.

"Be easy," César said to his wife, who looked somewhat over-anxious on the day before the great day. "Chevet, Tanrade, and the people from Foy's Café will occupy the mezzanine floor, Virginie will be on guard above, and the shop shall be shut up. There is nothing left for us to do but to strut about on the first floor."

On the 16th, at two o'clock, M. de la Billardière came for César. They were to go together to the Chancellerie de la Légion d'honneur, where Birotteau, with some ten others, was to be received as a Chevalier by M. le Comte de Lacépède. The perfumer had tears in his eyes when the mayor came for him; the surprise which Constance had planned had just taken place, and César had been presented with the gold buckles and solitaire.

"It is very sweet to be so loved," said he, as he stepped into the cab; Constance and Césarine standing on the threshold, and the assistants gathered in a group to see him go. All of them gazed at César in his silk stockings and black silk breeches, and the new coat of cornflower blue on which the ribbon was about to blaze—the red ribbon which, according to Molineux, had been steeped in blood.

When César came back at dinner-time, he was pale with joy. He looked at his Cross in every looking-glass, for in his first intoxication he could not be content to wear the ribbon only; there was no tinge of false modesty about his elation.

"The Grand Chancellor is charming, dear," said he; "at a word from M. de la Billardière, he accepted my invitation; he is coming with M. Vauquelin. M. de Lacépède is a great man, yes, as great as M. Vauquelin. He has written forty

volumes. And then he is a peer of France as well as an author. We must not forget to say 'Your Lordship,' or 'M. le Comte,' when we address him."

"Do eat your dinner," remarked his wife.—"Your father is worse than a child," Constance added, looking at Césarine.

"How nice that looks at your button-hole!" said Césarine. "They will present arms when you pass; we will go out together!"

"All the sentries will present arms to me."

Grindot and Braschon came downstairs as he spoke. "After dinner, sir, you and madame and mademoiselle may like to look over the rooms; Braschon's foreman is just putting up a few curtain brackets, and three men are lighting the candles."

"You will need a hundred and twenty candles," said Braschon.

"A bill for two hundred francs from Trudon," began Mme. César, but a look from the Chevalier checked her lamentations.

"Your fête will be magnificent, M. le Chevalier," put in Braschon.

"Flatterers already!" César thought within himself. "The Abbé Loraux enjoined it upon me not to fall into their snares, and to remain humble; I will keep my origin in mind."

But César did not understand the drift of the remark let fall by the rich upholsterer of the Rue Saint-Antoine. Braschon had made a dozen futile efforts to secure invitations for himself and his wife, his daughter, aunt, and mother-in-law. And so César made an enemy. On the threshold, Braschon did not call him again "M. le Chevalier."

Then came the private view. César and his wife and Césarine went out through the shop and came in from the street. The door had been reconstructed in a grand style. The two leaves were divided up into square panels, and in the centre of each panel was a cast-iron ornament, duly painted. This kind of door, which is now so common in Paris, was at that time the very newest thing. Beneath the double staircase in the vestibule, opposite the door, in the plinth which had

so disturbed César's mind, a sort of box had been contrived where an old woman could be ensconced. The vestibule, with its black-and-white marble floor, and its walls painted to look like marble, was lighted by a lamp of antique pattern, with four sockets for the wicks. The architect had combined a rich effect with apparent simplicity. A narrow crimson carpet relieved the whiteness of the stone. The first landing gave access to the mezzanine floor. The door on the staircase which gave access to the first-floor rooms, was in the same style as the street door, but this was a piece of cabinet work.

"How charming!" said Césarine. "And yet there is nothing which catches the eye."

"Exactly, mademoiselle, the effect is produced by the exact proportions of the stylobates, the plinths, the cornice, and the ornaments; and then I have not employed gilding anywhere; the colors are subdued, and there are no glaring tones."

"It is a science," said Césarine.

Then they entered the ante-room: it was simple, spacious, and tastefully decorated; a parquet floor had been laid down. The drawing-room was lighted by three windows, which looked upon the street: here the colors were white and red; the outlines of the cornices were delicate, so was the paint; there was nothing to dazzle the eyes. The ornaments on the mantel-shelf, of white marble supported on white marble columns, had been carefully chosen: there was nothing tawdry about them, and they were in keeping with the details of the furniture. In fact, throughout the room a subtle harmony prevailed, such as none but an artist can establish, by subordinating everything, down to the least accessories, to the general scheme of decoration: a harmony which strikes the philistine, though he cannot account for it. The light of twenty-four wax candles in the chandelier displayed the glories of the crimson silk curtains; the parquet floor tempted Césarine to dance. Through a green-and-white boudoir they reached César's study.

"I have put a bed here," said Grindot, throwing open the doors of an alcove, cleverly concealed between the two book-

-es. "Either you or Mme. Birotteau may fall ill, and an in-
-l requires a separate room."

"But the bookcase is full of bound books! . . . Oh!
-, wife!" cried César.

"No, this is Césarine's surprise."

"Pardon a father's emotion," exclaimed Birotteau, embrac-
-n's daughter.

"Of course, of course, sir," said Grindot. "You are in your
-house."

The prevailing tone of the study was brown, relieved by
-n; for by skilful modulations all the rooms were brought
harmony with each other. Thus the prevailing color of
room was more sparingly introduced as a subsidiary in
other, and *vice versâ*. The print of *Hero and Leander*
-ne conspicuous from a panel in César's new sanctum.

"And *you* are to pay for all this?" César said merrily.

"That beautiful engraving is M. Anselme's gift to you," said Césarine.

(Anselme, like the others, had managed to afford his sur-
-se.)

"Poor boy! he has done as I did for M. Vauquelin."

Mme. Birotteau's room came next in order. Here the archi-
-ct had lavished splendors to please the good folk whom he
-shed to use to his own ends. He had promised to make a
study of this redecoration, and he had kept his word. The
-om was hung with blue silk, but the cords and tassels were
-hite; while the furniture, covered with white cashmere, was
-eved with blue. The clock on the white marble chimney-
took the form of a marble slab, on which Venus reclined.
The pretty Wilton carpet, of Eastern design, was the keynote
Césarine's apartment, a dainty little bedroom hung with
-tz; there stood her piano, a pretty wardrobe with a mirror
-t, a small white bed with plain curtains, and all the little
-sessions that girls love.

The dining-room lay behind César's study and the blue-and-
bedroom, and was entered by a door on the staircase.
-re the decorations were in the style known as Louis XIV.

The sideboards were inlaid with brass and tortoise-shell; there was a Boule clock, and the walls were hung with stuffs and adorned with gilt studs.

No words can describe the joy of these three human beings, which reached its height when Mme. Birotteau, returning to her room, found her new dress lying there on the bed; the cherry-colored velvet gown, trimmed with lace, which her husband had given her. Virginie had stolen in on tiptoe to lay it there.

"The rooms do you great credit, sir," Constance said, addressing Grindot. "More than a hundred people will be here to-morrow evening, and you will be complimented by everybody."

"I shall recommend you," said César. "You will meet all the first-rate people, and you will be better known in a single evening than if you had built a hundred houses."

Constance, touched by what had happened, no longer thought of the expense or of criticising her husband, and for the following reasons. That morning, when Popinot had brought the *Hero and Leander*, he had assured her that the Cephalic Oil would be a success. Constance had always had a high opinion of Popinot's abilities and intelligence, and Popinot was working with unheard-of enthusiasm. The money lavished by Birotteau on these extravagances might amount to a good round sum, but the young lover had promised that, in six months' time, Birotteau's share of the profits on the sales of the oil would cover them. After nineteen years of apprehension, it was so sweet to put doubts aside for a single day; and Constance promised her daughter that she would not spoil her husband's joy by any afterthought, but would give herself up entirely to gladness. So when M. Grindot left them about eleven o'clock, she flung her arms about her husband's neck and shed a few tears of joy.

"Ah, César," she said, "you make me very silly and very happy."

"If it will only last, you mean, do you not?" César asked, smiling.

"It will last; I have no fear now," said Mme. César.

"That is right; you appreciate me at last."

Those who have sufficient greatness of character to know their weaknesses will confess that a poor orphan girl who, eighteen years ago, had been earning her living behind the counter of the *Little Sailor* in the Ile Saint-Louis, and a poor peasant lad who had come on foot from Touraine, stick in hand and with hobnailed shoes on his feet, might well feel gratified and happy to give such a fête on an occasion so much to their credit.

"*Mon Dieu*, I would willingly give a hundred francs for a visitor," cried César.

"M. l'Abbé Loraux," announced Virginie, and the Abbé appeared. The priest was at this time curate of Saint-Sulpice. Never has the power of the soul been more plainly revealed than in this reverend ecclesiastic, who left a profound impression on the minds of all those with whom he came in contact. The exercise of Catholic virtues had given sublimity to a harsh face, almost repellent in its ugliness; it was as if something of the light of heaven shone from it before the time. The influences of a simple and sincere life, passing into the blood, had modified those rugged features, the fires of charity had chastened their uncouth outlines. In Claparon's case, the nature of the man had stamped itself on his face and degraded and brutalized it, but here the grace of the three fair human virtues, Hope, Faith, and Charity, hovered about the wrinkled lines. There was a penetrating power in his words, slowly and gently spoken. He dressed like other priests in Paris, and allowed himself a chestnut-brown overcoat. No trace of ambition had sullied the pure heart, which the angels would surely bear to God in its primitive innocence; it had required all the kindly urgency of the daughter of Louis XVI. to induce the Abbé Loraux to accept a benefice in Paris, and then he had taken one of the poorest.

Just now he looked somewhat disquieted as he surveyed all

these splendors; he smiled at the three before him, and shook his head.

"Children," he said, "it is my part to comfort those that mourn, and not to be present at festivals. I have come to thank M. César and to congratulate you. There is only one festival that will bring me here—the marriage of this pretty maid."

A quarter of an hour later the Abbé took his leave, and neither César nor his wife had dared to show him the new arrangements. The sober apparition threw a few drops of cold water on César's joyous ebullitions.

They slept that night amid the new glories, each taking possession of the little luxuries and pretty furniture for which they had longed. Césarine helped her mother to undress before the mirror of the white marble toilet table; César was fain to use his newly-acquired superfluities at once; and the heads of all the three were filled with visions of the joys of the morrow.

The next day, at four o'clock, they had been to mass, and had read vespers; the mezzanine floor had been delivered over to the secular arm, in the shape of Chevet's people, and Césarine and her mother betook themselves to their toilets. Never was costume more becoming to Mme. César than the cherry-colored velvet gown with the lace about it, the short sleeves adorned with lappets; the rich stuff and the glowing color set off the youthful freshness of her shapely arms, the dazzling whiteness of her skin, the gracious outlines of her neck and shoulders. The naïve happiness felt by every woman when she is conscious that she looks at her best lent a vague sweetness to Mme. Birotteau's Grecian profile; and the outlines of her face, finely cut as a cameo, appeared in all their delicate beauty. Césarine, in her white crape dress, with a wreath of white roses in her hair, and a rose at her waist, her shoulders and the outlines of her bodice modestly covered by a scarf, turned Popinot's head.

"These people are eclipsing us," said Mme. Roguin to her husband, as she went through the rooms.

The notary's wife was furious. A woman can always measure the superiority or inferiority of a rival, and Mme. Roguin felt that she was not as beautiful as Mme. César.

"Pooh, not for long. In a little while the poor thing will be ruined, and your carriage will splash the mud on her as she goes afoot through the streets."

Vauquelin's manner was perfect. He came with M. de Lacépède, who had brought his colleague in his carriage. To Mme. César, in her radiant beauty, the two learned Academicians paid compliments in scientific language.

"You possess the secret, unknown to chemistry, of retaining youth and beauty, madame."

"You are in your own house, so to speak, M. l'Académicien," said Birotteau.—"Yes, M. le Comte," he went on, turning to the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor, "I owe my success to M. Vauquelin. I have the honor of presenting to your lordship M. le Président (of the Tribunal of Commerce).—That is M. le Comte de Lacépède, a peer of France, and one of the greatest men in France besides; he has written forty volumes," he added, for the benefit of Joseph Lebas, who came with the President.

The guests were punctual. The ordinary tradesman's dinner party followed, abundant in good humor and merriment, and enlivened by the homely jokes that never fail to provoke laughter. Ample justice was done to the excellent dishes, and the wines were thoroughly appreciated. It was half-past nine before they went into the drawing-room for coffee, and cabs had already begun to arrive with impatient dancers. An hour later, the rooms were full, and the dance had become a rush. M. de Lacépède and M. Vauquelin went, in spite of entreaties from César, who followed them despairingly to the staircase. He had better fortune with the elder Popinot and M. de la Billardière, who remained.

With the exception of three women, Mlle. Fontaine, Mme. Jules, and Mme. Rabourdin, who severally represented aristocracy, finance, and official dignities, and by their brilliant beauty, dress, and manner presented a striking contrast to the

rest of the assembly, the toilettes of the remainder were of the heavy and substantial order, too suggestive of a well-lined purse, which gives to a crowd of citizens' wives and daughters a certain air of vulgarity, made cruelly prominent in the present case by the daintiness and grace of the three ladies.

The bourgeoisie of the Rue Saint-Denis displayed itself majestically in the full glory of its absurdities carried to the burlesque point. It was that same bourgeoisie, nor more nor less, which tricks its offspring out in the uniform of the Lancers or of the National Guard, that buys *Victories and Conquests*, *The Old Soldier at the Plough*, and admires *The Pauper's Funeral*, which rejoices to go on Guard, goes on Sundays to the inevitable country house, is at pains to acquire a distinguished air, and dreams of municipal honors; the bourgeoisie that looks on every one with jealous eyes, and yet is kindly, helpful, devoted, warm-hearted, and compassionate, ready to subscribe for the orphan children of a General Foy, for the Greeks (all unwitting of their piracies), for the Champ d'Asile when it no longer exists; a bourgeoisie that falls a victim to its own good qualities, and is flouted by a social superiority which marks a real inferiority, for an ignorance of social conventions fosters that native kindliness of heart; a bourgeoisie which brings up frank-hearted daughters inured to work, full of good qualities, which are lost at once if they mingle with the classes above them; a common-sense, matter-of-fact womankind, from among whom the worthy Chrysale should have taken a wife; that bourgeoisie, in short, so admirably represented by the Matifats, the druggists in the Rue des Lombards, who had supplied the *Queen of Roses* for sixty years.

Mme. Matifat, anxious to appear stately, wore a turban on her head, and was dancing in a heavy poppy-red gown embroidered with gold, a toilette that harmonized with a haughty countenance, a Roman nose, and the splendors of a crimson complexion. Even M. Matifat, so glorious when the National Guard was reviewed, when you might see the chain and bunch of seals blazing on his portly person fifty paces away, was ob-

secured by this Catherine II. of the counting-house; yet her short, stout, spectacled consort, with his shirt collar almost up to his ears, distinguished himself by his deep bass voice and by the richness of his vocabulary.

He never said "Corneille," but "the sublime Corneille." Racine was the "tender Racine"; Voltaire, oh! Voltaire, takes the second place in every class, more of a wit than a genius, but nevertheless a man of genius!" Rousseau, "a gloomy, suspicious nature, a man over-brimming with pride, who ended by hanging himself." He related tedious stock anecdotes about Piron, who is looked upon as a prodigious personage among the bourgeoisie. There was a slight tendency to obscenity in Matifat's conversation; he was an infatuated admirer of theatrical divinities; and it was even said of him that, in imitation of old Cardot and the wealthy Camusot, he kept a mistress. Now and then Mme. Matifat would hastily interrupt him on the brink of an anecdote by crying, at the top of her voice, "Mind what you are going to tell us, old man!" In familiar conversation she always addressed him as "old man." The voluminous lady of the Rue des Lombards caused Mlle. de Fontaine's aristocratic countenance to lose its repose; the haughty damsel could not help smiling when she overheard Mme. Matifat say to her husband, "Don't make a rush for the ices, old man; it is bad style!"

It is harder to explain the differences which distinguish the great world from the bourgeoisie than it is for the bourgeoisie to efface them. The women, conscious of their toilettes, felt that this was a holiday; they made no attempt to conceal an enjoyment which plainly showed that this ball was a great event in their busy lives; while the three women, each of whom represented a different higher social sphere, were at that moment as they would be on the morrow. They did not seem to be dressed for the occasion, had no desire to behold themselves amid the unaccustomed marvels of their costume, and showed no uneasiness as to its effect, which they had ascertained once and for all as they put the last touches to their ball dresses before the mirror; there was no excitement

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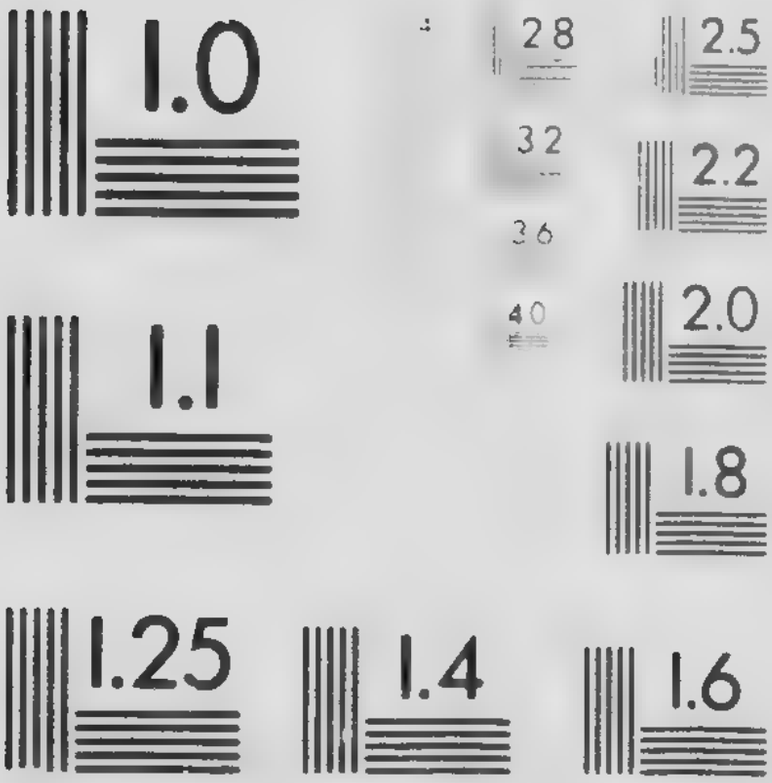

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in their faces; they danced with the grace and ease of movement which the forgotten sculptors of a bygone age caught and recorded in their statues. But the others bore the impress of daily toil, toil showed itself in their attitude, in their exaggerated enjoyment; their glances were naïvely curious, their voices were not subdued to the key of the low murmur which gives such an inimitable piquancy to ballroom conversation; and, above all things, they lacked the impertinent gravity which contains the germ of epigram, the repose of manner which marks those whose self-command is perfect. So Mme. Rabourdin, Mme. Jules, and Mlle. de Fontaine, who had expected infinite amusement from this perfumer's ball, stood out against the background of citizens' wives and daughters, conspicuous by their languid grace, by the exquisite taste displayed in their toilettes, and by their manner of dancing, even as three principal performers at the Opéra are set off by the rank and file of supernumeraries on the stage. Jealous and astonished eyes watched them. Mme. Roguin, Constance, and Césarine formed a link, as it were, between these three aristocratic types and the tradesmen's womankind.

At every ball a moment comes when excitement, or the torrents of light, the gaiety, the music, and the movement of the dance carries away the dancers, and all the shades of difference are drowned in the *crescendo* of the *tutti*. In a little while the ball would become a romp. Mlle. de Fontaine determined to go; but as she sought the venerable Vendean leader's arm, Birotteau and his wife and daughter hastened to prevent the defection of the aristocracy of their assembly.

"There is a perfume of good taste about the rooms which really surprises me; I congratulate you upon it," said the insolent girl, addressing the perfumer.

Birotteau was too much intoxicated by the compliments publicly addressed to him to understand this speech; but his wife flushed up, and did not know what to answer.

"This is a national festival which does you honor," Camusot said.

I have seldom seen so fine a ball," said M. de la Billar-
, an official fib that cost him nothing.

Birotteau took all the congratulations seriously.

What a charming sight, and how good the band is! Shall
often give us balls?" asked Mme. Lebas.

What beautiful rooms! Did you plan them yourself?"
red Mme. Desmarets, and César ventured on a lie, and
ved it to be thought that he was the originator of the
of decoration. Césarine, whose list of partners for
adrilles was of course filled up, learned how much deli-
there was in Anselme's nature.

"If I only listened to my own wishes," he had said in her
as they rose from dinner, "I would entreat the favor of a
rille with you, but my happiness would cost our self-love
dear."

Césarine, who thought all men who walked straight un-
ful in their gait, determined to open the ball with Popi-
Popinot, encouraged by his aunt, who had bade him be
dared to speak of his love during the quadrille to the
ing girl at his side, but in the roundabout ways that
lovers take.

"My fortune depends on you, mademoiselle."

And how?"

There is but one hope which can give me the power to
it."

Then hope."

Do you really know all that you have said in those two
?" asked Popinot.

Hope for fortune," said Césarine, with a mischievous
.

soon as the quadrille was over, Anselme rushed to his
l. "Gaudissart! Gaudissart! succeed, or I shall blow
brains out." He squeezed his friend's arm in a Herculean
. "Success means that I shall marry Césarine. She has
me so; and see how beautiful she is!"

Yes, she is prettily rigged out," said Gaudissart; "and
s rich. We will do her in oil."

The good understanding between Mlle. Lourdois and Alexandre Crottat (Roguin's successor-designate) did not escape Mme. Birotteau, who could not give up without a pang the prospect of seeing her daughter the wife of a Paris notary. Uncle Pillerault, after exchanging a greeting with little Molineux, took up his quarters in an easy-chair near the bookcase. Hence he watched the card-players, listened to the talk about him, and went from time to time to the door to look at the moving flower-garden as the dancers' heads swayed in the figures of the quadrille. He turned a truly philosophical countenance on it all. The men were unspeakable, with the exception of du Tillet, who had already learned something of the manners of the fashionable world; of young Billardière, an incipient dandy; M. Jules Desmarets, and the official personages. But among the faces, all more or less comical, which gave the assembly its character, there was one in particular, worn into meaningless smoothness like the head on a five-franc piece issued by the Republic, but curious by reason of its association with a suit of clothes. This person, it will have been guessed, was none other than the petty tyrant of the Cour Batave, arrayed in fine linen, yellowed with lying by in the press, displaying a shirt frill of venerable lace, secured by a pin with a bluish cameo. Short breeches of black silk treacherously revealed the spindle shanks on which he dared to repose his weight. César triumphantly took him round the four apartments devised by the architect on the first floor of his house.

"Hey! hey! it is your own affair, sir," said Molineux. "My first floor done up in this way will be worth another thousand crowns."

Birotteau turned this off with a joke, but the little old man's words and tone had been like the prick of a needle. "I shall soon have my first floor again; this man is ruining himself!" that was the underlying sense of that *"will be worth,"* which had been a sudden revelation of Molineux's claws.

The pale, meagre face and cruel eyes struck du Tillet,

so attention had been called to the landlord in the first ance by the watch-chain from which a pound weight of ets hung and jingled, the green coat with white threads and the odd-looking, turned up collar, which gave the an somewhat the appearance of a rattlesnake. So the er went over to the little money-lender to learn how to be at a merry-making.

"Here, sir," said Molineux, putting a foot into the oir, "I am on M. le Comte Granville's property, but here" pointed to the other foot) "I am on my own, for this belongs to me."

d Molineux, more than willing to gratify the only one had a mind to listen to him, was so charmed with du s attentive attitude, that he described himself, and gave count of his habits, together with a complete history of auciness of Master Gendrin, and an exact relation of transactions with the perfumer, without which transac- the ball would not have taken place.

! so M. César has paid his rent beforehand," said du t: "nothing is more contrary to his habits."

h! I asked him to do so; I am so accommodating with enants!"

f old Birotteau goes bankrupt," thought du Tillet, "that rogue will certainly make a capital assignee. Such cap- ness is not often met with; he must amuse himself at like Domitian, by killing flies when he is alone."

Tillet betook himself to the card-tables, where Claparon his orders) had already taken his post. Du Tillet ght that, screened by a lamp shade, at *bouillotte,* his y banker would escape all scrutiny. As they sat te one another, they looked such perfect strangers the most suspicious observer could have discovered no f an understanding between them. Gaudissart, who that Claparon had risen in the world, did not dare to proach him; the wealthy ex-commercial traveler had given portentously cool stare of an upstart who does not to be claimed by an old acquaintance.

Towards five o'clock in the morning the ball came to an end, like a spent rocket. By that time there only remained some forty cabs out of a hundred or more which had filled the Rue Saint-Honoré; and in the ballroom they were dancing the *boulangère*, which later was succeeded by the cotillon and the English galop. Du Tillet, Roguin, young Cardot, Jules Desmarets, and the Comte de Granville were playing *bouillotte*. Du Tillet had won three thousand francs. The light of the wax-candles was growing pale in the dawn when the card-players rose to join in the last quadrille.

In bourgeois houses this supreme enjoyment never comes to an end without some enormities. Those who imposed awe or restraint on the others are gone; the intoxication of movement, the hot rooms, the spirits that lurk in the most harmless beverages, relax the stiffness of the dowagers, who allow themselves to be drawn into the quadrilles, and yield to the excitement of the moment; men are heated, the lank hair comes down over their faces, and their grotesque appearance provokes laughter; the younger women grow frivolous, flowers have fallen here and there from their hair. Then it is that the bourgeois Momus enters, followed by his antic crew! Laughter breaks out in peals, and every one gives himself up to the merriment, thinking that with morning labor will resume its sway over him. Matifat was dancing with a woman's hat on his head; Célestin was indulging in burlesque movements. A few of the ladies clapped their hands noisily when they changed the figures of the intermidable quadrille.

"How they are enjoying themselves!" said the happy Birotteau.

"If only they break nothing," said Constance, who stood by Uncle Pillerault.

"You have given the most magnificent ball that I have seen, and I have seen many," said du Tillet, with a bow to his late employer.

There is in one of Beethoven's eight symphonies a fantasia like a great poem; it is the culminating point of the *finale*

e Symphony in C minor. When, after the slow prepara- of the mighty magician, so well understood by Habeneck, rich curtain rises on this scene; when the bow of the en- astic leader of the orchestra calls forth the dazzling , through which the whole gathered force of the music , the poet, as his heart beats fast, will understand that ball was in Birotteau's life like this moment when his imagination feels the quickening power of the music, this *motif*, which in itself perhaps raises the Symphony C minor above its glorious sisters. For a radiant fairy ngs up and waves her wand, and you hear the rustling the purple silken curtains raised by angels; the golden rs, carved like the bronze gates of the Baptistery in rence, turn upon their hinges of adamant, and your eyes der over far-off glories and vistas of fairy palaces. Forms of this earth glide among them, the incense of prosperity , the fire is kindled on the altar of fortune, the scented r circles about it. Beings clad in white blue-bordered tunics e divinely as they float before your eyes, shapes delicate ethereal beyond expression turn faces of unearthly ty upon you. The Loves hover in the air, filling it with flames of their torches. You feel that you are loved; you glad with a joy that you drink in without comprehend- it as you bathe in the floods of a torrent of harmony ich pours out for each the nectar of his choice; for as the sic slides into your inmost soul, its desires are realized for moment. Then when you have walked for a while in , the enchanter plunges you back, by some deep and sterious transition of the bass, into the morass of chill lity, only to draw you thence when he has awakened in you irst for his divine melodies, and your soul cries out to r those sounds again. The history of the soul at the most rious point in that beautiful *finale* is the history of the ations which this festival brought in abundance for Con- nce and César. But it was no Beethoven, but a Collinet, had composed upon his flute the *finale* of their commer- l symphony.

The three Birotteaus, tired but happy, slept that morning with the sounds of the festival ringing in their ears. The building, repairs, furniture, banquets, toilettes, and Césarine's library (for the money had been repaid to her) had altogether raised the expense of that entertainment, without César's having a suspicion of it, to sixty thousand francs. So much did that luckless red ribbon, fastened by the King to a perfumer's buttonhole, cost the wearer. If any misfortune should befall César Birotteau, this extravagance of his was like to bring him into serious trouble at the police court; a merchant lays himself open to a term of two years' imprisonment if, on examination, his expenses are considered excessive. It is, perhaps, more unpleasant to go to the Sixth Chamber for simple bad management or for a foolish trifle, than to come before a Court of Assize for a gigantic fraud; and in some people's eyes it is better to be a knave than a fool.

II.

CÉSAR STRUGGLES WITH MISFORTUNE

A WEEK after the ball, that final flare of the straw-fire of prosperity which had lasted for eighteen years, and now was not to die out in darkness, César stood watching the passers-by through his shop window. He was thinking of the whole extent of his business affairs, and found them almost more than he could manage. Hitherto his life had been quite simple; he manufactured and sold his goods, or he bought to sell again. But now there was the speculation in building land, and his own share in the enterprise of A. Popinot & Company, besides a hundred and sixty thousand francs worth of bills to meet. Before long he would be compelled to discount some of his customers' bills (and his wife would not like it), or there must be an unheard-of success on Popinot's part; altogether, the poor man had so many things to think of that he felt as if he had more skeins to wind than he could hold.

How would Anselme steer his course? Birotteau treated Popinot much as a professor of rhetoric treats a student; he felt little confidence in his capacity, and was sorry that he could not be always on hand to look after him. The admonitory kick bestowed on Anselme's shins by way of a recommendation to hold his tongue in Vauquelin's presence will illustrate the fears which the perfumer felt as to the newly-started business. Birotteau was very careful to hide his thoughts from his wife and daughter, and from his assistant; but within himself he felt as a Seine boatman might feel if by some freak of fortune a Minister should give him the command of a frigate. Such thoughts as these, rising like a fog in his brain, were but little favorable to clear think-

ing, he stood, therefore, trying to see things distinctly in his own mind.

Just at that moment a figure, for which he felt an intense aversion, appeared in the street; he beheld his second landlord, little Molineux. Everybody knows those dreams in which events are so crowded together that we pass through a whole lifetime, dreams in which a fantastical being reappears from time to time, always as the bearer of bad tidings—the villain of the piece. It seemed to Birotteau that fate had sent Molineux to play a similar part in his waking life. That countenance had grinned diabolically at him when the feast was at its height, and had turned an evil eye on the splendor; and now when César saw it again, he remembered the impression which the "little curmudgeon" (to use his own expression) had given him but so much the more vividly, because Molineux had given him a fresh feeling of repulsion by suddenly breaking in upon his musings.

"Sir," said the little man in his vampire voice, "we did this business in such an offhand fashion, that you forgot to approve the additions to this little private covenant of ours."

As Birotteau took up the lease to repair the omission, the architect came in, bowed to the perfumer, and hovered about him with a diplomatic air.

"You know, sir, the difficulties at the outset when you are starting in business," he said at last in Birotteau's ear; "you are satisfied with me; you would oblige me very much by paying my honorarium at once."

Birotteau, who had paid away all his ready money and emptied his portfolio, told Célestin to draw a bill for two thousand francs at three months and a form of receipt.

"It is a very lucky thing for me that you undertook to pay the quarter which your next-door neighbor owed," said Molineux, with malicious cunning in his smile. "My porter has been round to tell me that the authorities have been affixing seals to his property, because Master Cayron had disappeared from the scene."

"If only they don't come down on me for the five thou-
d francs," thought Birotteau.

"People thought that he was doing very well," said Lour-
s, who had just come in to hand his statement to the per-
er.

"No one in business is quite safe from reverses until he
res," remarked little Molineux, folding up his document
h punctilious neatness.

The architect watched the little old creature with the pleas-
that every artist feels at the sight of a living caricature
ch confirms his prejudices against the bourgeoisie.

"When you hold an umbrella over your head, you
nerally suppose that it is sheltered if it rains," he ob-
ved.

Molineux looked harder at the architect's moustache and
royale" than at his face, and the contempt that he felt for
Grindot quite equaled Grindot's contempt for him. He
tayed on to give the architect a parting scratch. By dint of
ving with his cats, there had come to be something feline
Molineux's ways as well as in his eyes.

Just at that moment, Ragon and Pillerault came in to-
ther.

"We have been talking over this business with the judge,"
Ragon said in César's ear. "He says that in a speculation of
his kind we must actually complete the purchase and have
a receipt from the vendors if we are really to be severally pro-
t——"

"Oh! are you in the affair of the Madeleine?" asked Lour-
s. "People are talking about it; there will be houses to
ld!"

The house-painter had come to ask for a prompt settle-
nt, but he found it to his interest not to press the per-
mer.

"I have sent in my statement because it is the end of the
r," he said in a low voice for César's benefit; "I do not
nt anything."

"Well, what is it, César?" asked Pillerault, noticing his

nephew's surprise, for César, overcome by the sight of the statement, made no answer to either Ragon or Lourdois.

"Oh! a trifle, I took five thousand francs of bills from a neighbor, the unbrella dealer, who is bankrupt. If he has given me bad paper, I shall be caught like a simpleton."

"Why, I told you so long ago," cried Ragon; "a drowning man will catch hold of his father's leg to save himself, and drag him down with him. I have seen so much of bankruptcies! A man is not exactly a rogue to begin with; but when he gets into trouble, he is forced to become one."

"True," said Pillerault.

"Ah! if I ever get as far as the Chamber of Deputies, or have some influence with Government . . ." said Birotteau, rising on tiptoe, and sinking back again on his heels.

"What will you do?" asked Lourdois. "You are a wise man."

Molineux, always interested by a discussion on law, stayed in the shop to listen; and as the attention paid by others is infectious, Pillerault and Ragon, who knew César's opinions, listened none the less with as much gravity as the three strangers.

"I should have a Tribunal and a permanent bench of judges," said César, "and a public prosecutor for criminal cases. After an examination, made by a judge who should discharge the functions of agents by procuration trustees and registrar, the trader should be declared *temporarily insolvent* or a *fraudulent bankrupt*. In the first case, he should be bound over to pay his creditors in full; to that end, he should be trustee for his own and his wife's property (for everything he had, or might inherit, would belong to his creditors); he should manage his estate for their benefit and under their inspection; in fact, he should carry on the business for them, signing his name, in every case, as 'such a one, in liquidation,' until everybody was paid in full. But if he were made a bankrupt, he should be condemned to stand in the pillory in the Exchange for a couple of hours, as they used to do, with a green cap on his head. His own

operty and his wife's, and his interest in any other estate, ld be forfeit to his creditors, and he should be banished kingdom."

"Business would be a little safer," said Lourdois; "people ld think twice before going into a speculation."

"The law as it stands is never carried out," cried César, ng himself up; "more than fifty merchants out of a hun-d could only pay seventy-five per cent, or they sell goods twenty-five per cent below invoice price, and spoil trade that way."

"M. Birotteau is in the right," said Molineux; "the law ows far too much latitude. The entire estate should be de over to the creditors, or the man should be disgraced."

"Bother take it," said César, "at the rate at which things going, a merchant will become a licensed robber. By ng his name he can dip in any one's purse."

"You are severe, M. Birotteau," said Lourdois.

"He is right," said old Ragon.

"Every man who fails is a suspicious character," César nt on, exasperated by the little loss which rang in his ears; was like the huntsman's first distant halloo to a stag.

As he spoke, Chevet's steward brought his invoice, a stry-cook's boy from Félix and the Café Foy arrived, to-er with the clarinet-player of Collinet's band, each with account.

"The *Quart d'heure de Rabelais*," smiled Ragon.

"My word, that was a splendid fête of yours," said Lour-s.

"I am busy," César said, and the messengers departed, leav-their invoices.

"M. Grindot," said Lourdois, who noticed that the archi-was folding up a bill which bore César's signature, "you check my account and see that it is all in order; you need nothing more than run through it, all the prices have been reed to on M. Birotteau's behalf."

Pillerault looked at Lourdois and Grindot.

"If architect and contractor settle the prices between them, u are being robbed," he said in his nephew's ear.

Grindot went out. Molineux followed and came up to him with a mysterious expression.

"Sir," he remarked, "you heard what I said, but you did not take my meaning; I wish you an umbrella when it comes on to rain."

Fear seized on Grindot. A man clings all the more tightly to gain which is not lawfully his; such is human nature. As a matter of fact, too, this had been a labor of love for the artist; he had given all his time and his utmost skill to the alterations of the rooms; he had done five times as much as he had been paid for, and had fallen a victim to his own self-love. The contractors had had little difficulty in tempting him. And besides the irresistible argument, there was a menace, understood though not expressed, of doing him an injury by slandering him, and there was a yet more cogent reason for yielding—the remark that Lourdois made as to the building land near the Madeleine. Clearly, Birotteau did not mean to put up a single house; he was only speculating in land.

Architects and contractors are in somewhat the same relative positions as actors and dramatists; they are dependent on each other. Grindot, to whom Birotteau left the settlement of the charges, was for the handicraftsman as against the citizen householder. So the end of it was that three large contractors—Lourdois, Chaffaroux, and Thorien the carpenter—declared him to be "one of those good fellows for whom it is a pleasure to work." Grindot foresaw that the accounts on which he was to have his share would be paid, like his own fee, by bills; and this little old man had given him doubts as to whether those bills would be met. Grindot was prepared to show no mercy; after the manner of artists, the most [illegible] enemies of the bourgeois.

B[illegible] end of December, César had invoices for sixty thousand [illegible] Félix, the Café Foy, Tanrade, and others, to whom small amounts were owing which must be paid in cash, had sent three times for the money. In business these small trifles do more harm than a heavy loss; they set rumors in

circulation. A loss which every one knows is a definite thing, but panic knows no limits. Birotteau's safe was empty.

Then fear seized on the perfumer. Such a thing had never happened before in his business career. Like all people who have almost forgotten their struggles with poverty, and have little strength of character, this incident, a daily occurrence in the lives of most petty shopkeepers in Paris, troubled César's brain.

He told Célestin to send in invoices to his own customers; such an unheard-of order had to be repeated twice before the astonished first assistant understood it. The "clients"—the grand name that shopkeepers use to apply to their customers, and retained by César in speaking of them, in spite of his wife, who had yielded at last with a "Call them what you like, so long as they pay us"—the "clients" were wealthy people, who paid when they pleased; in César's business there were no bad debts, though the outstanding accounts often amounted to fifty or sixty thousand francs. The second assistant took the invoice-book, and began to copy out the largest amounts. César stood in fear of his wife. He did not wish her to see his prostration beneath the simoom of misfortune, so he determined to go out.

"Good-day, sir," said Grindot, coming in with the careless air that artists assume when they talk of business matters, to which they say they are entirely unaccustomed. "I cannot obtain ready money of any sort or description for your paper, so I am compelled to ask you to give me cash instead. It is a most unfortunate thing for me that I must take this step; but I have not been to the money-lender's about it; I should not like to hawk your name about; I know enough of business to know that it would be casting a slur on it; so it is to your own interest to——"

"Speak lower, sir, if you please," said Birotteau in bewilderment. "I am very much surprised at this."

Lourdois came in.

"Here, Lourdois," said Birotteau with a smile, "do you

know about this?——" he stopped short. With the good faith of a merchant who feels secure, the poor man had been about to ask Lourdois to take Grindot's bill, by way of laughing at the architect; but he saw a cloud on Lourdois' brow, and trembled at his own imprudence. The harmless joke was the death-knell of a credit not above suspicion. In such a case a rich merchant takes back his bill; he does not offer it. Birotteau felt dizzy; it was as if a stroke of a pickaxe had laid open the pit which yawned at his feet.

"My dear M. Birotteau," said Lourdois, retiring with him to the back of the shop, "my account has been checked and passed; I must ask you to have the money ready for me by to-morrow. My daughter is going to be married to young Crottat; he wants money, and notaries will not wait and bargain; besides, no one has ever seen my name on a bill."

"You can send round the day after to-morrow," said Birotteau stiffly (he counted on the payment of the invoices). "And you also, sir,"—he spoke to Grindot.

"Why can I not have it at once?" asked the architect.

"I have my men's wages to pay in the Faubourg," said César, who had never told a lie.

He took up his hat to go with them; but the bricklayer came in with Thorien and Chaffaroux, and stopped him just as he shut the door.

"We really want the money, sir," said Chaffaroux.

"Eh! I haven't the wealth of the Indies," cried César, out of patience; and he quickly put a hundred paces between himself and the three visitors.—"There is something underneath all this. Confound the ball! Everybody takes you for a millionaire. Still, there was something very strange about Lourdois," he thought; "there is some snake in the hedge."

He went along the Rue Saint-Honoré without thinking where he was going, feeling at a very low ebb, when at a corner of the street he ran up against Alexandre Crottat, like a battering-ram, or as one mathematician absorbed in the working of a problem might collide with another.

"Ah! sir," exclaimed the future notary, "one word with you! Did Roguin pay over your four hundred thousand francs to M. Claparon?"

"You were there when the thing was done. M. Claparon gave me no receipt of any kind; my bills were to be negotiated. . . . Roguin ought to have paid them to him . . . my two hundred and forty thousand francs in coin. . . . He was told that the money was to be paid down and the transaction completed. . . . M. Popinot of the Tribunal says. . . . The vendor's receipt! . . . But . . . what makes you ask the question?"

"What makes me ask you such a question? To know whether your two hundred thousand francs are in Claparon's hands or Roguin's. Roguin is such an old acquaintance of yours, that he might have scrupled to take your money, and handed it over to Claparon; if so, you will have had a narrow escape! But how stupid I am! He has made off with them, for he has M. Claparon's money; luckily, Claparon had only paid a hundred thousand francs. Roguin has absconded; I myself paid him a hundred thousand francs for his practice without taking a receipt; I gave it him as I might give my purse to you to keep for me. Your vendors have not been paid a stiver; they have just been round to see me. The money you raised on your land has no existence for you, nor for the man of whom you borrowed it; Roguin had swallowed it like your hundred thousand francs; which—er—he has not had this long while. And he has taken your last payment of a hundred thousand francs with him too; I remember going to the bank for the money."

The pupils of César's eyes dilated so widely that he could see nothing but red flames before him.

"Your draft on the bank for a hundred thousand francs, hundred thousand francs of mine paid for the practice, and a hundred thousand francs belonging to M. Claparon—three hundred thousand francs gone like smoke, to say nothing of the defalcations that have yet to be found out," the young notary went on. "They feared for Mme. Roguin's

life: M. du Tillet spent the night beside her. Du Tillet himself has had a narrow escape! Roguin has been pestering him this month past to draw him into the Madeleine speculation, but, luckily, all his capital was locked up in some project of the Nucingens'. Roguin wrote his wife a frightful letter. I have just seen it. For five years he has been gambling with his clients' money, and why? To spend it on a mistress—*La belle Hollandaise;* he left her a fortnight before he made this stroke. She had squandered till she had not a farthing; her furniture was sold; she had put her name on bills of exchange. Then she hid from her creditors in a house in the Palais-Royal, and was murdered there last evening by an officer in the army. Heaven soon dealt the punishment to her who, beyond a doubt, had run through Roguin's fortune. There are women to whom nothing is sacred; think of squandering away a notary's practice!

"Mme. Roguin will have nothing except what has been secured to her by her legal mortgage, and all the scoundrel's property has been mortgaged beyond its value. The practice is to be sold for three hundred thousand francs! and I, who thought I was doing a good stroke of business, must begin by paying an extra hundred thousand francs for my practice; I hold no receipt; and there are defalcations which will eat up the value of the practice and the deposit of caution money. The creditors will think that I am in it if I say anything about my hundred thousand francs, and you have to be very careful of your reputation when you are beginning for yourself.—You will hardly get thirty per cent. Such a brew to drink of at my age! That a man of fifty-nine should take up with a woman. . . . The old rogue! Three weeks ago he told me not to marry Césarine, and said that before long you would not have bread to eat, the monster!"

Alexandre might have talked on for a long while: Birotteau stood like a man turned to stone. Each sentence fell like a stunning blow. He heard nothing in the sounds but his death-knell; just as when Alexandre first began to speak, he had seemed to see his own house in flames. He looked so

white, and stood so motionless, that Alexandre Crottat, who had taken the worthy perfumer for a clear-headed, capable man of business, was frightened at last. Roguin's successor did not know that this stroke had swept away César's whole fortune. A swift thought of suicide flashed through the brain of the merchant, so profoundly religious by nature. In such a case suicide is a way of escape from a thousand deaths, and it seems logical to accept but one. Alexandre Crottat lent his arm, and tried to walk with him, but it was impossible César tottered as if he had been drunk.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" asked Crottat. "My good M. César, pluck up heart a little! It takes more than this to kill a man! Besides, you will recover forty thousand francs; the man who lent you the money had not the money to lend, and did not pay it over to you; you might plead that the contract was void."

"My ball.—My Cross.—Two hundred thousand francs' worth of my paper on the market, and nothing in the safe. . . . The Ragons, Pillerault. . . . And my wife, who saw it all!"

A shower of confused words, which called up ideas that overwhelmed him and caused unbearable pangs, fell like hail laying waste the flower beds of the *Queen of Roses.*

"If only my head were cut off," Birotteau cried at last; "it is so heavy that it weighs me down, and it is good for nothing in this . . ."

"Poor old Birotteau!" said Alexandre; "then are you in difficulties?"

"Difficulties!"

"Very well; keep up your heart and struggle with them."

"Struggle!" echoed the perfumer.

"Du Tillet used to be your assistant; he has a level head, he will help you."

"Du Tillet?"

"Come along!"

"Good heavens! I don't like to go home like this," cried Birotteau. "You that are my friend, if friends there are, you

who have dined with me, you in whom I have taken an interest, call a cab for me, for my wife's sake; and come with me, Xandrot . . ."

With no little difficulty Crottat put the inert mechanism, called César, into a cab.

"Xandrot," he said, in a voice broken with tears, for the tears had begun to fall, and the iron band about his head seemed to be loosened a little, "let us call at the shop. Speak to Célestin for me. My friend, tell him that it is a matter of life and death for me and for my wife. And let no one prattle about Roguin's disappearance on any pretext whatever. Ask Césarine to come down, and beg her to allow no one to say anything about it to her mother. You must beware of your best friends, Pillerault, the Ragons, everybody——"

The change in Birotteau's voice made a deep impression on Crottat, who understood the importance of the request. On their way to the magistrate, they stopped at the house in the Rue Saint-Honoré. Célestin and Césarine were horrified to see Birotteau lying back in white and speechless hebetude, as it were, in the cab.

"Keep the affair a secret for me," said the perfumer.

"Ah!" said Xandrot to himself, "he is coming round; I thought it was all over with him."

The conference between Alexandre and the magistrate lasted long. The President of the Chamber of Notaries was sent for; César was taken hither and thither like a parcel; he did not stir, he did not utter a word. Towards seven o'clock in the evening Alexandre Crottat took the perfumer home again, and the thought of appearing before his wife had a bracing effect on him. The young notary had the charity to precede him, to tell Mme. Birotteau that her husband had had a sort of fit.

"His ideas are confused," he said, making a gesture to describe a bewildered state of the brain; "perhaps he should be bled, or leeches ought to be put on him."

"I knew how it would be," said Constance—nothing was further from her thoughts than the actual disaster—"he did

not take his medicine as usual at the beginning of winter, and for these two months he has been working like a galley slave, as if he had to earn his daily bread."

So César's wife and daughter begged him to go to bed, and Dr. Haudry, Birotteau's doctor, was sent for. Old Haudry was a doctor of the school of Molière; he had a large practice, and adhered to old-fashioned methods and out-of-date formulæ; consulting physician though he was, he drugged his patients like any quack doctor. He came, made his diagnosis, and ordered the immediate application of a sinapism to the soles of César's feet; he detected symptoms of cerebral congestion.

"What can have brought it on?" asked Constance.

"The damp weather," said the doctor. Césarine had given him a hint.

A doctor is often obliged professionally to talk nonsense with a learned air, to save the honor or the life of persons in health who stand about the patient's bed. The old physician had seen so much, that half a word sufficed for him. Césarine went out on to the stairs to ask about the treatment.

"Rest and quiet; then when there is less pressure on the head, we will venture on tonics."

For two days Mme. César sat by her husband's bedside. Often she thought that he was delirious. As he lay in his wife's pretty blue chamber, he said many things, which were enigmas for Constance, at the sight of the hangings, the furniture, and the costly magnificence of the room.

"He is light-headed," she said to Césarine, when César sat upright in bed and began solemnly to repeat scraps of the Code. "If the personal or household expenses are considered excessive. . . . Take away those curtains!" he cried.

After three dreadful days of anxiety for César's reason, the Tourangeau's strong peasant constitution triumphed, the pressure on the brain ceased. M. Haudry ordered cordials and a strengthening diet, and after a cup of coffee seasonably administered, César was on his feet again. Constance, worn out, took her husband's place.

"Poor thing!" said César, when he saw her sleeping.

"Come, papa, take courage! You have so much talent, that you will triumph over this. Never mind. M. Anselme will help you," and Césarine murmured the sweet, vague words, made still sweeter by tenderness, which put courage into the most sorely defeated, as a mother's crooning songs soothe the pain of a teething infant.

"Yes, child, I will struggle. But not a word of this to any one whatever; not to Popinot, who loves us, nor to your uncle. In the first place, I will write to my brother; he is a canon, I believe, a priest attached to a cathedral. He spends nothing, so he must have saved something. Five thousand francs put by every year for twenty years—he ought to have a hundred thousand francs. Priests have credit in country places."

Césarine, in her hurry to set a little table and the necessaries for writing a letter before her father, brought the remainder of the rose-colored cards for the ball.

"Burn them all!" cried the merchant. "The devil alone could have put the notion of that ball into my head. If I fail, it will look as if I were a rogue. Come, let us go straight to the point."

César's letter to François Birotteau.

"My dear Brother,—My business is passing through a crisis so difficult that I implore you to send me all the money at your disposal, even if you are obliged to borrow.—Yours truly,

César.

"Your niece Césarine, who is with me as I write this letter, while my poor wife is asleep, desires to be remembered to you, and sends her love."

This postscript was added at Césarine's instance. She gave the letter to Raguet.

"Father," said she, when she came up again, "here is M. Lebas, who wants to speak to you."

"M. Lebas!" cried César, starting as though misfortune had made a criminal of him, "a judge!"

"Dear M. Birotteau," said the stout merchant-draper as he came in, "I take too deep an interest in you—knowing each other so long as we have, and being elected judges together, as we were, for the first time—not to let you know that one Bidault, otherwise Gigonnet, has bills of yours made payable to his order, *without guarantee*, by the firm of Claparon. Those two words are not merely an insult; they give a fatal shake to your credit."

"M. Claparon would like to speak to you," said Célestin, putting in his head; "am I to show him up?"

"We shall soon hear the why and wherefore of this affront," remarked Lebas.

"This is M. Lebas, sir," said César, as Claparon came in; "he is a judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, and my friend ——"

"Oh! the gentleman is M. Lebas, is he?" said Claparon, interrupting César, "delighted to make his acquaintance; M. Lebas of the tribunal, there are so many Lebas, to say nothing of the *hauts* and the *bas*——"

"He has seen the bills which I gave to you, and which (so you told me) should not be negotiated," Birotteau went on, interrupting the rattle in his turn; "he has seen them with the words 'without guarantee' written upon them."

"Well," said Claparon, "and as a matter of fact they will not be negotiated; they are in the hands of a man with whom I do a great deal of business—old Bidault. That is why I put 'without guarantee' on them. If the bills had been meant to be put in circulation, you would have made them to his order in the first place. M. Lebas, as a judge, will understand my position. What do the bills represent? The price of some landed property. To be paid by whom? By Birotteau. Why would you have me guarantee Birotteau by my signature? We must, each of us, pay our share of the aforesaid price. Now, isn't it enough to be jointly and severally responsible to the vendors? I have made an inflexible rule

in business: I no more give my signature for nothing than I give a receipt for money that is still to be paid. I assume the worst. Who signs, pays. I don't want to be laid open to pay three times over."

"Three times," said César.

"Yes, sir," said Claparon. "I have already guaranteed Birotteau to the vendors; why should I guarantee him again to the bill-discounter? Our case is a hard one; Roguin goes off with a hundred thousand francs of mine; so, even now, my half of the land is costing me five hundred thousand instead of four. Roguin has taken two hundred and forty thousand francs belonging to Birotteau. What would you do in my place, M. Lebas? Put yourself in my shoes. I have not the honor of being known to you, any more than I know M. Birotteau. Do you take me? We go halves in a business speculation. You pay down all your share of the money in cash; and as for me, I give bills for my share. I offer you the bills, and out of excessive benevolence you take them and give money for them. You learn that Claparon the rich banker, looked up to by everyone—I accept all the virtues in the world—that the virtuous Claparon is in difficulties for a matter of six millions; would you select that moment to give your name as a guarantee for mine? You would be mad! Well, now, M. Lebas, Birotteau is in the position in which I imagined Claparon to be. Don't you see that in that case, being jointly and severally responsible, I may be made to pay the purchasers; that I can be called upon to pay a second time for Birotteau's share to the extent of his bills, that is, if I back them, without having——"

"Pay whom?" interrupted the perfumer.

"Without having his half of the land," pursued Claparon, heedless of the interruption, "for I should have no hold on him; so I should have to buy it over again. So—I might pay three times over."

"Repay whom?" insisted Birotteau.

"Why, the holder of the bills; if I endorsed them, and you came to grief."

"I shall not fail, sir," said Birotteau.

"All right," said Claparon. "You have been a judge, you a clever man of business, you know that we ought to provide for all contingencies, so do not be astonished is I act in a business-like way."

"M. Claparon is right," said Joseph Lebas.

"I am right," continued Claparon, "right from a business point of view. But this is a question of landed property. Now, what ought I myself to receive?—Money, for the creditors must be paid in coin. Let us set aside the two hundred and forty thousand francs, which M. Birotteau will find, I am sure," said Claparon, looking at Lebas. "I came to ask you for the trifling sum of twenty-five thousand francs," he added, looking at Birotteau.

"Twenty-five thousand francs!" cried César, and it seemed to him that the blood turned to ice in his veins. "But, sir, what for?"

"Eh! my dear sir, we are bound to sign, seal, and deliver two deeds in the presence of a notary. Now, as to paying for the land, we may arrange that among ourselves, but when the Treasury comes in—your humble servant! The Treasury does not amuse itself with idle words; it allows you credit from your hand to your pocket, and we shall have to come down with the money—forty-four thousand francs this week for law expenses. I was far from expecting reproaches when I came here; for, thinking that you might find it inconvenient to pay twenty-five thousand francs, I was going to tell you that by the merest chance I had saved for you——"

"What?" asked Birotteau, giving in that word that cry of distress which no man can mistake.

"A trifle! Twenty-five thousand francs in bills given to you by one and another, which Roguin gave me to discount. I have credited you with the amount as against the registration and other expenses; I will send you the account; there is a little matter to deduct for discounting them, and six or seven thousand francs will still be owing to me."

"This all seems to me to be perfectly fair," said Lebas. "In

the place of this gentleman, who appears to me to understand business very well, I should act the same towards a stranger."

"This will not be the death of M. Birotteau," said Claparon; "it takes more than one blow to kill an old wolf; I have seen wolves with bullets in their heads running about like—Lord, yes, like wolves."

"Who could have foreseen such rascality on Roguin's part?" asked Lebas, as much alarmed by César's dumbness as by so vast a speculation outside the perfumery trade.

"A little more, and I should have given this gentleman a receipt for four hundred thousand francs," said Claparon, "and I was in a stew. I had paid over a hundred thousand francs to Roguin the night before. Our mutual confidence saved me. It would have seemed to us all a matter of indifference whether the money should be lying at his office or in my possession till the day when the contracts were completed."

"It would have been much better if each had deposited his money with the Bank of France till the time came for paying it over," said Lebas.

"Roguin was as good as the Bank, I thought," said César. "But he too is in this business," he added, looking at Claparon.

"Yes, for a fourth, and in name only," answered Claparon. "After the imbecility of allowing him to go off with my money, there is but one thing more out-and-out idiotic—and that would be to make him a present of some more. If he sends me back my hundred thousand francs, and two hundred thousand more on his own account, then we will see! But he will take good care not to put the money into an affair that must simmer for four years before you have a spoonful of soup. If he has only gone off with three hundred thousand francs, as they say, he will want quite fifty thousand livres a year to live decently abroad."

"The bandit!"

"Eh! goodness! An infatuation for a woman brought Roguin to that pass," said Claparon. "What man at his age can answer for it that he will not be mastered and carried

.. by a last fancy? Not one of us, sober as we are, can where it will end. A last love is the most violent. Look Cardot, and Camusot, and Matifat—every one of them s a mistress! And if all of us are gulled, is it not our vn fault? How was it that we did not suspect a notary speculated on his own account? Any notary, any bill-..er, or stockbroker who does business on his own account, not to be trusted. Failure for them is fraudulent bank-ptcy; they are sent up to the Court of Assize for trial; so, course, they prefer a foreign court. I shall not make that nder again. Well, well, we are all too weak to pass judg-nt by default on a man with whom we have dined, who has n grand balls, a man in society, in fact! Nobody com-ns; it is wrong."

"Very wrong," said Birotteau. "The provisions of the law th regard to liquidations and insolvency ought to be re-ed throughout."

"If you should happen to nee me," said Lebas, address- Birotteau, "I am quite at your service."

"M. Birotteau has need of no one," said the indefatigable ttler (du Tillet had opened the sluices after pouring in water, and Claparon was repeating a lesson which du Tillet had very skilfully taught him). "His position is clear. uin's estate will pay a dividend of fifty per cent, from what ing Crottat tells me. Besides the dividend, M. César will e by the forty thousand francs which the lender on the rtgage did not pay over; he can raise more money on his perty; and we have four months in which to pay two hun-d thousand francs to the vendors. Between now and then Birotteau will meet his bills (for he ought not to reckon on eting them with the money which Roguin made off with). if M. Birotteau should find himself a little pinched . . well, with one or two accommodation bills, he will ll through."

The perfumer took heart as he listened. Claparon an-ed the business, summed it up, and traced out a plan of on, as it were, for him. Gradually his expression grew de-

cided and resolute, and he conceived a great respect for the ex-commercial traveler's business capacity. Du Tillet had thought it expedient to make Claparon believe that he was one of Roguin's victims. He had given Claparon a hundred thousand francs to give to Roguin, who returned them to du Tillet. Claparon, being uneasy, played his part to the life; he told anybody who cared to listen to him that Roguin had mulcted him of a hundred thousand francs. Du Tillet doubted Claparon's strength of mind; he fancied that principles of honesty and conscientious scruples still lingered in his puppet, and would not confide the whole of his plans to him; he knew, moreover, that his instrument was incapable of guessing at them.

A day came when his commercial go-between reproached him. "If our first friend is not our first dupe, we should never find a second," said du Tillet, and he broke in pieces the tool which was no longer useful.

M. Lebas and Claparon went out together, and Birotteau was left alone.

"I can pull through," he said to himself. "My liabilities, in the shape of bills to be met, amount to two hundred and thirty-five thousand francs. That is to say—seventy-five thousand francs for the house, and a hundred and seventy-five thousand francs for the building-land. Now, to cover this, I have Roguin's dividend, which will amount may be to a hundred thousand francs; and I can cancel the loan on my land, that is a hundred and forty thousand francs in all. The thing to be done is to make a hundred thousand francs by the Cephalic Oil; and a few accommodation bills, or a loan from a banker, will tide me over until I can make good the loss, and the building-land reaches its enhanced value."

When a man in misfortune once can weave a romance of hope out of the more or less solid reasonings with which he fills the pillow on which he lays his head, he is often saved. Many a one has taken the confidence given by an illusion for energy.—Perhaps the half of courage is really hope, and the Catholic religion reckons hope among the virtues. Has not

pe buoyed up many a weakling, giving him time to await the nces which life brings?

Birotteau made up his mind to apply, in the first place, his wife's uncle, and to disclose his position to his rela- before going elsewhere. He went down the Rue Saint- noré and reached the Rue Bourdonnais, not without ex- periencing inward pangs, which caused such violent internal turbance that he thought his health was deranged. There a fire in his vitals. As a matter of fact, those whose sen- e is keenest in the diaphragm suffer in that region; just hose whose faculty of perception resides in the brain in the head. In the grave crises, the system is at- d at the point where the temperament locates the seat ife in the individual; weaklings have the colic, a Na- on grows drowsy.

Before a man of honor can storm a confidence and over- p the barriers of pride, he must have felt the prick of the of Necessity, that hard rider, more than once. So for days Birotteau had borne that spurring before he went to Pillerault, and then family reasons decided him—how- r th ngs might go, he must explain the position to the rn ironmonger. Yet, for all that, when he reached the r, he felt in his inmost soul as a child feels on a visit to dentist, that his courage was sinking away; and Birot- was not about to face a momentary pang, he quailed fore a whole lifetime to come. Slowly he went up the stairs, found the old man reading the *Constitutionnel* by the le; on a little round table his frugal breakfast was set— l, butter, Brie cheese, and a cup of coffee.

"There is real wisdom," said Birotteau to himself, and he ed his uncle's life.

"Well," said Pillerault, laying down his spectacles, "I rd about Roguin's affair yesterday at the Café David; s mistress, *La belle Hollandaise*, is murdered! I hope , warned by us who want to be actual proprietors, you been to Claparon and taken a receipt?"

"Alas! uncle, that is just it; you have laid your finger on spot. No."

"Oh, bother! you are ruined," said Pillerault, dropping his paper; and Birotteau picked it up, although it was the *Constitutionnel.*

This thought was such a shock, that Pillerault's stern features, always like a profile on a coin, grew hard as if they had been struck in bronze. He stared with steady eyes that saw nothing, through the windows, at the opposite wall, and listened while Birotteau poured out a long discourse. Evidently while he heard he deliberated; he was pondering the case with the inflexibility of a Minos who crossed the Styx of commerce, when he left the Quai des Morfondus for his little third-floor dwelling.

"Well, uncle," asked Birotteau at last, expecting some answer to a final entreaty to sell *rentes* worth six thousand francs a year.

"Well, my poor nephew, I cannot do it. Things have gone too far. We, the Ragons and I, shall both lose fifty thousand francs. It was by my advice that the good folk sold their shares in the Wortschin Mines. I feel myself bound, if they lose the money, not to replace their capital, but to give them a helping hand, and to help my niece and Césarine. You might perhaps all of you want bread, and you must come to me— ."

"Bread, uncle?"

"Well, yes, bread. Just look the facts in the face: *you will not pull through!* Out of five thousand six hundred francs a year, I will set aside four thousand to divide between you and the Ragons. When your disaster comes, I know Constance, she will slave and deny herself everything—and so will you, César!"

"There is hope yet, uncle."

"I do not see it as you do."

"I will prove the contrary."

"Nothing would please me better."

Birotteau went without an answer for Pillerault. He had come to find comfort and encouragement, he had received a second blow; a blow less heavy than the first one, it is true:

whereas the first had been dealt at his head, this thrust gone to his heart, and the poor man's life lay in his af-ons. He had gone down part of the way, and then he ed and went up again.

"Sir," he said, in a constrained voice, "Constance knows hing of this, keep the secret for me at least; and beg the gons not to disturb the peace that I need if I am to fight inst misfortune."

Pillerault made a sign of assent.

"Take courage, César," he said. "I see that you are angry h me, but some day you will acknowledge that I am nt, when you think of your wife and daughter."

Discouraged by this opinion given by his uncle, whose -headed ss he acknowledged, César suddenly dropped the heights of hope into the miry slough of uncertainty. n a man's affairs take an ugly turn like this, he is apt come the plaything of circumstances, unless he is of lerault's temper; he follows other people's ideas, or his much as a wayfarer pursues a will-o'-the-wisp. He ws himself to be swept away by the whirlwind when he uld either lie prostrate with his eyes shut, and let it pass r him, or rise and watch the direction that it takes, to pe the blast. In the midst of his anguish, Birotteau ought himself of the necessary steps to be taken with re-d to his loan. He went to see Derville, a consulting bar-er in the Rue Vivienne, so as to set about it the sooner, Derville should see any chance of cancelling the contract. m he found sitting, wrapped in his white flannel dressing-wn, by the fireside, staid and self-possessed, as is the wont men of law, accustomed as they are to the most harrowing losures. Birotteau felt, as a new thing in his experience, necessary coolness; it was like ice to an excited man Birotteau, telling the story of his misfortunes, smarting the wounds that he had received, stricken with the r induced by the risks his fortunes were running, and lly beset, since honor and life and wife and child were nperiled.

"If it is proved," said Derville, when he had heard him out, "that the lender no longer had in Roguin's keeping the sum of money which Roguin induced you to borrow of him, as there has been no transfer of the actual money, the contract might be annulled, and the lender will have his remedy (as you also will have for your hundred thousand francs) in Roguin's caution-money. In that case, I will answer for your lawsuit, so far as it is possible to answer for any action at law, for no action is a foregone conclusion."

The opinion of so learned an expert put a little heart into Birotteau. He begged Derville to obtain a judgment within a fortnight. The advocate answered to the effect that Birotteau might be obliged to wait three months before the contract would be annulled.

"Three months!" cried Birotteau, who thought that he had found an expedient for raising money at once.

"Well, if you yourself succeed in gaining a prompt hearing for your case, we cannot hurry your opponent to suit your pace; he will take advantage of the delays of procedure; advocates are not always at the Palais; who knows but that the other party will let judgment go against him by default? And he will appeal. You can't set your own pace, my dear sir!" said Derville, smiling.

"But at the Tribunal of Commerce——"

"Oh!" said the advocate, "the Consular Tribunal is one thing, and the Tribunal of First Instance is another. You do things in a slashing way over yonder. Now, at the Palais de Justice there are formalities to be gone through. These formalities are the bulwarks of Justice. How would you like it if a demand for forty thousand francs was suddenly fired off at you? Well, your opponent, who will see that amount compromised, will dispute it. Delays are the *chevaux-de-frise* of the law."

"You are right," said Birotteau, and he took leave of Derville with a deadly chill at his heart.—"They are all right. Money! Money!" cried the perfumer, out in the street, talking

himself, as is the wont of busy men in this turbulent seeth- Paris, which a modern poet calls "a vat."

As he came into his shop, one of the assistants, who had n out delivering invoices to the customers, told him that the New Year was at hand, every one had torn off the re- form at the foot and kept the invoices.

"Then there is no money anywhere!" Birotteau exclaimed d in the shop. All the assistants looked up at this, and he his lips.

In this way five days went by; and during those five days Braschon, Lourdois, Thorien, Grindot, Chaffaroux, and all creditors whose bills remained unpaid, passed through chameleon's intermediate transitions of tone, from the ne hues of confidence to the wrathful red of the com- ial Bellona. In Paris, in such crises, suspicion is as quick each the panic stage as confidence is slow to show expan- e symptoms; and when a creditor once adopts the restrin- system of doubts and precautions in business relations, he t to descend to underhand villainies that put him below debtor's level. From cringing civility, the creditors passed essively through the inflammatory phase, the red of im- ence, the lurid coruscations of importunity, to outbursts disappointment, and from the cold-blue stage of making their minds to the black insolence of threatening to serve rit.

Braschon, the rich furniture-dealer of the Faubourg Saint- ine, who had not been included in the invitations to the sounded to arms in his quality of the creditor whose self- has been wounded. Paid he meant to be, and within ty four hours; he required security, not deposits of fur- re, but a second mortgage, the mortgage for forty thou- l francs on the property in the Faubourg du Temple. In of their furious recriminations, these gentry still left occasional intervals of peace, when he might breathe; nstead of bringing a resolute will to carry these outworks awkward position, and so putting an end to them, Birot- was taxing all his wits to keep the state of things from

the knowledge of his wife, and the one person who could give him counsel knew nothing of his difficulties. He stood sentinel on the threshold of his shop. He confided his momentary inconvenience to Célestin, who watched his employer with curious and astonished eyes; already César had fallen somewhat in his esteem, as men accustomed to prosperity are apt to dwindle when evil days discover that all their power consists in the increased facility of dealing with matters of every-day experience, acquired by an ordinary intelligence.

But if César lacked the mental energy required for defending himself when attacked at so many points at once, he had sufficient courage to face his position. Before the 15th of January he required the sum of sixty thousand francs, and thirty thousand of these were due on the 31st of December. Part of this sum was owing for the house, part for rent and accounts to be paid in ready money, part of it in bills to be met; with all his efforts he could only collect twenty thousand francs, so that there was a deficit of ten thousand, to be made up by the end of the month. Nothing seemed hopeless to him, for he had already ceased to look beyond the present moment, and, like an adventurer, had begun to live from day to day. At length he resolved to make what for him was a bold stroke. Before it was known that he was in difficulties, he would apply to Francois Keller, banker, orator, and philanthropist, widely known for his beneficence, and for his desire to stand well with the mercantile world of Paris, always with a view to representing their interests one day as a deputy in the Chamber. In politics the banker was a Liberal, and César was a Royalist; but the perfumer decided that the capitalist was a man after his own heart, and that a difference of opinion in politics was but one reason the more for opening an account. If paper should be necessary, he did not doubt Popinot's devotion, and counted upon obtaining from him some thirty bills of a thousand francs each; with these he might hold out until he gained his lawsuit, the forty thousand francs involved in it being offered as security to the most urgent creditors.

The effusive soul, who was wont to confide to the pillow of

dear Constance the least emotions of his existence, who his courage from her, and was wont to seek of her the thrown by contradiction on all topics, was cut off from exchange of ideas with his first assistant, his uncle, and ife, and found that the weight of his cares was thereby ed. Yet this self-sacrificing martyr preferred suffering e to the alternative of casting his wife's soul into the fiery ; he would tell her about the danger when it was past. aps, too, he shrank from telling her the hideous secret: tood in some fear of his wife, and this fear lent him age. He went every morning to low mass at Saint-Roch, told his troubles to God.

"If I do not meet a soldier on my way back from Saint- h, I will take it as a sign that my prayer is heard. It shall God's answer to me," he said to himself, after he had ved for deliverance.

And, for his happiness, he did not meet a soldier. Yet, ertheless, his heart was over-full, and he needed another an heart to whom he could make moan. Césarine, to m he had already told the fatal news, learned the whole truth, and stolen glances were exchanged between them, nces fraught with despair or repressed hope, passionate vocations, appeals, and sympathetic responses, answering ams of intelligence between soul and soul. For his wife ar put on high spirits and mirth. If Constance asked question—"Pshaw, everything was all right. Popinot" whom César gave not a thought) "was doing well! The was selling! Claparon's bills would be met: there was ing to fear." The hollow merriment was ghastly. When fe lay sleeping amid the splendors, Birotteau would rise, fall to thinking over his misfortune; and more than once arine came in, in her night-shift, barefooted, with a shawl her white shoulders.

"Papa, you are crying: I can hear you," she would say, and would cry herself as she spoke.

When César had written to ask the great Francois Keller make an appointment with him, he fell into such a state of

torpor that Césarine persuaded him to walk out with her. In the streets of Paris he saw nothing but huge red placards, and the words CEPHALIC OIL in staring letters everywhere met his eyes.

While the glory of the *Queen of Roses* was thus waning in disastrous gloom, the firm of A. Popinot was dawning radiant with the sunrise splendors of success. Anselme had taken counsel of Gaudissart and Finot, and had launched his oil boldly. During the past three days two thousand placards had been posted in the most conspicuous situations in Paris. Every one in the streets was confronted with the Cephalic Oil, and willy-nilly must read the pithy remarks from Finot's pen as to the impossibility of stimulating the growth of the hair, and the perils attendant on dyeing it, together with an extract from a paper read before the Académie des Sciences by Vauquelin. It was as good as a certificate of existence for dead hair, thus held out to those who should use the Cephalic Oil. The shop-doors of every perfumer, hair-dresser, and wig-maker in Paris were made glorious with gilded frames, containing a beautiful design, printed on vellum paper, with a reduced facsimile of the picture of *Hero and Leander* at the top, and beneath it ran the motto, *The ancient peoples of antiquity preserved their hair by the use of* CEPHALIC OIL.

"He has thought of permanent frames; he has found an advertisement that will last for ever!" said Birotteau to himself, as he stood staring in dull amazement at the shop-front of the *Silver Bell*.

"Then you did not see a frame on your own door?" asked his daughter. "M. Anselme brought it himself, and left three hundred bottles of the oil with Célestin."

"No, I did not see it," he answered.

"And Célestin has already sold fifty to chance comers, and sixty to our own customers."

"Oh!" said César.

The sound of myriad bells that misery sets ringing in the ears of her victims had made the perfumer dizzy; his head seemed to spin round and round in those days. Popinot had

ted a whole hour to speak with him on the day before, and gone away after chatting with Constance and Césarine; women told him that César was very busy over his great me.

"Oh yes, the building-land!" Popinot had said.

Luckily, Popinot had not left the Rue des Cinq-Diamants a month; he had worked day and night at his business, and seen neither Ragon, nor Pillerault, nor his uncle. The r lad was never in bed before two o'clock in the morning; had only two assistants, and at the rate at which things going he would soon have work enough for four. Opunity is everything in business; success is a horse which, aught by the mane and ridden by a bold rider, will carry on to fortune. Popinot told himself that he should reve a welcome when, at the end of six months, he could ry the news to his aunt and uncle—"I am saved; my for- is made!"—a welcome, too, from Birotteau when, at the of the first half year, he should bring him his share of the fits—thirty or forty thousand francs! He had not heard Roguin's disappearance, nor of César's consequent disasters d difficulties; so that he could not let fall any indiscreet reerks in Madame Birotteau's presence.

Popinot had promised Finot five hundred francs for each the leading newspapers (ten in all), and three hundred nes for each second-rate paper (and of these, too, there ten), if the Cephalic Oil was mentioned three times a nth in each. Of those eight thousand francs, Finot beheld thousand as his own, his first stake to lay on the vast n table of speculation. So he had sprung like a lion upon friends and acquaintances; he haunted newspaper offices; ters of newspaper articles awoke from slumber to find him ting by their pillows; and the evening found him pacing bbies of all the theatres. "Remember my oil, my dear ow; it is nothing to me; a matter of good fellowship, you y; Gaudissart, a jolly dog." With this formula, his hagues always began and ended. He filled up spaces at the t of the last columns in the papers, and left the money to

those upon the staff. He was as cunning as any super who is minded to transform himself into an actor, and as active as an errand boy on sixty francs a month; he wrote insinuating letters, he worked on the vanity of all and sundry, he did dirty work for editors, to the end that his paragraphs might be inserted in their papers. His enthusiastic energy left no means untried—money, dinners, platitudes. By means of tickets for the play he corrupted the men who finish off the columns towards midnight with short paragraphs of small news items already set up; hanging about the printing-office for that purpose, as if he had proofs to revise.

So by dint of making every one his friend, Finot secured the triumph of the Cephalic Oil over the *Pâte de Regnault* and the *Mixture Brésilienne*, over all the inventions, in fact, whose promoters had the wit to comprehend the influence of journalism and the effect produced upon the public mind by the piston stroke of the reiterated paragraph. In that age of innocence, journalists, like draught-oxen, were unaware of their strength; their heads ran on actresses—Mesdemoiselles Florine, Tullia, Mariette—they lorded it over all creation, and made no practical use of their powers. In Andoche's propositions there was no actress to be applauded, no drama to be put upon the stage; he did not ask them to make a success of his vaudevilles, nor to pay him for his paragraphs; on the contrary, he offered money in season and opportune breakfasts; so there was not a newspaper that did not mention the Cephalic Oil, and how that it was in accordance with Vauquelin's investigations; not a journal that did not scoff at the superstition that the hair could be induced to grow, and proclaim the danger of dyeing it.

These paragraphs rejoiced Gaudissart's heart. He laid in a supply of papers wherewith to demolish prejudice in the provinces, and accomplished the manœuvre known among speculators since his time as "taking the public by storm." In those days newspapers from Paris exercised a great influence in the departments, the hapless country districts being still "without organs." The Paris newspaper, therefore, was

taken up as a serious study, and read through from the head-line to the printer's name on the last line of the last page, where the irony of persecuted opinion might be supposed to lurk.

Gaudissart, thus supported by the press, had a brilliant success from the very first in every town where his tongue had rung. Every provincial shopkeeper was anxious for a frame and copies of *Hero and Leander*. Finot devised that charming joke against Macassar Oil, which drew such laughter at the Funambules, when Pierrot takes up an old house-brush, barely worn down to the holes, and rubs it with Macassar Oil, and lo the stump becomes a mop, a piece of irony which brought down the house. In later days Finot would gaily relate how that but for those three thousand francs he must have died of want and misery. For him three thousand francs was a fortune. In this campaign he discovered the power of advertising, which he was to wield so wisely and so much to his own profit. Three months later this pioneer was the editor of a small paper, of which after a time he became the proprietor, and so laid the foundation of his fortune. Even as the Illustrious Gaudissart, that Murat among commercial travelers, "took the public by storm," and gained brilliant victories along the frontiers and in the provinces for the house of Popinot, so did the cause gain ground in public opinion in Paris, thanks to the desperate assault upon the newspapers, which gave it the prompt publicity likewise secured by the *Mercure Brésilienne* and the *Pâte de Renaud*. Three fortunes were made by this means, and then began the descent of the thousands of ambitious tradesmen who have since gone down by battalions into the arena of journalism, and there killed advertising into being. A mighty revolution was wrought.

At that moment the words "Popinot & Company" were shouting on every wall and shop door; and Birotteau, unable to measure the enormous area over which these announcements were displayed, contented himself with saying to Césarine, "Little Popinot is following in my footsteps," with-

out comprehending the difference of the times, without appreciation of the new methods and improved means of communication which spread intelligence much more rapidly than heretofore.

Birotteau had not set foot in his factory since the ball; he did not know how busy and energetic Popinot had been. Anselme had set all Birotteau's operatives on the work, and slept in the place. He saw Césarine sitting on every packing-case and reclining on every package; her face looked at him from each new invoice. "She will be my wife!" he said to himself, as with coat thrown off, and shirt-sleeves rolled above the elbows, he hammered in the nails with all his might, while his assistants were sent out on business.

The next day, after spending the whole night in pondering what to say and what not to say to the great banker, César reached the Rue du Houssaye, and entered, with a heart that beat painfully fast, the mansion of the Liberal financier, the adherent of a political party accused, and not unjustly, of desiring the downfall of the Bourbons. To Birotteau, as to most small merchants in Paris, the manners and customs and the personality of those who move in high financial circles were quite unknown; for the smaller traders usually deal with lesser houses, which form a sort of intermediate term, a highly satisfactory arrangement for the great capitalists, who find in them one guarantee the more.

Constance and Birotteau, who had never overdrawn their balance, who had never known what it was to have no money in the safe, and no bills in the portfolio, had not had recourse to these banks of the second order; and, for the best of reasons, were entirely unknown in the higher financial world. Perhaps it is a mistaken policy sedulously to abstain from borrowing even though you may not require the money; opinions differ on this head; but be that as it may, Birotteau at that moment deeply regretted that he had never put his signature to a piece of paper. Yet, as he was known as a deputy-mayor and a shrewd man of business, he imagined that he would only have to mention his name, and he should

the banker at once; he did not know that men flocked to Kellers' audiences as to the court of a king. In the ante-ber of the study occupied by the man with so many to greatness, Birotteau found himself among a crowd posed of deputies, writers, journalists, stockbrokers, great hants, men of business, engineers, and, above all, of fa-ars, who made their way through the groups of speakers knocked in a particular manner at the door of the study, ere they had the privilege of entry.

"What am I in the middle of this machinery?" Birotteau d himself, quite bewildered by the stir and bustle in this ry, where so much brain-power was at work furnishing bread for the camp of the Opposition; this theatre where rsals of the grand tragi-comedy played by the Left were nt to take place.

On one hand he heard a discussion relative to a loan that being negotiated to complete the construction of the cipal lines of canal recommended by the Department of ls and Bridges; a question of millions! On the other, rnalists, the bankers' jackals, were talking of yesterday's ing and of their patron's *extempore* speech. During the hours while he waited, he saw the banker-politician thrice erge from his cabinet, accompanying some visitor of im-tance for a few paces through the ante-chamber. Keller as far as the door with the last—General Foy.

"It is all over with me!" Birotteau said to himself, and thing clutched at his heart.

As the great banker returned to his cabinet, the whole troop courtiers, friends, and followers crowded after him, like canine race about some attractive female of the species. or two bolder curs slipped in spite of him into the audi-chamber. The conferences lasted for five minutes, ten utes, a quarter of an hour. Some went away visibly chop-n; some with a satisfied look; some assumed important Time went by, and Birotteau looked anxiously at the No one paid the slightest attention to the man with a care, sighing restlessly in the gilded chair by the

hearth, at the very door of the closet that contained that panacea for all troubles—credit.

Dolefully César thought how that he too in his own house, and for a little while, had been a king, as this man was, morning after morning; and he fathomed the depths of the abyss into which he was falling. He had bitter thoughts! How many unshed tears were crowded into those two hours! How many petitions he put up that this man might incline a favorable ear; for beneath the husk of popularity-seeking good-nature, Birotteau instinctively felt that there lurked in Keller an insolent, tyrannous, and violent temper, a brutal craving to domineer, which alarmed his meek nature. At length, when but ten or a dozen people were left, Birotteau determined to start up when the outer door of the audience chamber creaked on its hinges, and to put himself on a level with the great public speaker with the remark, "I am Birotteau!" The first grenadier who flung himself into the redoubt at Borodino did not display more courage than the perfumer when he made up his mind to carry out this manœuvre.

"After all," said he to himself, "I am his deputy-mayor," and he rose to give his name.

François Keller's countenance took on an amiable expression; clearly he meant to be civil; he glanced at Birotteau's red ribbon, turned, opened the door of his cabinet, and indicated the way; but stayed behind himself for a while to speak with two newcomers who sprang up the staircase with tempestuous speed.

"Decazes would like to speak with you," said one of these two.

"It is a question of making an end of the Pavillon Marsan! The King sees clearly. He is coming over to us!" cried the other.

"We will all go to the Chambers," returned the banker, and he entered his cabinet with the air of the frog that would fain be an ox.

"How can he think of his own affairs?" thought César, overwhelmed.

The radiance of the sun of superiority dazzled the per-
er, as the light blinds those insects which can only exist
in shade or in the dusk of a summer night.

Birotteau saw a copy of the Budget lying on a vast table,
ing piles of pamphlets a [illegible] of the *Moniteur*, which
on, displaying marked passages, past utterances of a
Minister, which were shortly [illegible] t his head; he was
made to eat his words [illegible] the plaudits of a crowd of
[illegible], incapable of comprehending that events modify every-
[illegible] On another table stood a collection of boxes full of
rs, a heap of memorials and projects, the thousand and
reports confided to a man in whose exchequer every
nt industry endeavors to dip.

The regal splendor of the cabinet, filled with pictures and
[illegible] and works of art; the litter on the chimney-piece; the
mulations of documents relating to business concerns at
and abroad, heaped up like bales of goods,—all these
ngs impressed Birotteau; he dwindled in his own eyes, his
usness increased, the blood ran cold in his veins.

On François Keller's desk there lay some bundles of bills,
s of exchange, and circular-letters. To these the great
addressed himself; and as he swiftly put his signature
ose that required no examination, "To what do I owe the
or of your visit, sir?" asked he.

At these words addressed to him alone, by the voice that
to all Europe, while the restless hand never ceased to
verse the paper, the poor perfumer felt as if a red-hot iron
been thrust through his vitals. His face forthwith as-
ed that ingratiating expression with which the banker
grown familiar during ten years of experience; the ex-
sion always meant that the wearers desired to involve the
se of Keller in some affair of great importance to the
l-be borrowers and to no one else, an expression which
the banker's doors upon them at once. So François
er shot a glance at César, a Napoleonic glance, which
ed to go through the perfumer's head. This imitation of
r Emperor was a slight piece of affectation which certain

parvenus permitted themselves, though the false coin was scarcely a passable copy of the true. For César, of the extreme Right in politics, the fanatical partisan of the Government, the factor in the monarchical election, that glance was like the stamp which a custom-house officer sets on a bale of goods.

"I do not want to take up your minutes unduly, sir; I will be brief. I have come on a simple matter of private business, to know if you will open a loan account with me. As an ex-judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, and a man well known at the Bank of France, you can understand that if I had bills to discount I should only have to apply to the Bank where you are a Governor. I have had the honor of being associated in my functions at the Tribunal with M. le Baron Thibon, the head of the bill-discounting department, and he certainly would not refuse me. But as I have never tried to borrow money nor accepted a bill, my signature is unknown, and you know how many difficulties lie in the way of negotiating a loan in such a case——"

Keller moved his head; and Birotteau, construing this as a sign of impatience, continued:

"The fact is, sir, that I have engaged in a speculation in land, outside my own line of business——"

François Keller, still signing and reading, and, to all appearance, paying no attention to César's remarks, turned at this, with a sign that he was following what was said. Birotteau took heart; his affair was in a promising way, he thought; he breathed more freely.

"Go on; I understand," said Keller good-humoredly.

"I am the purchaser of one-half of the building-land near the Madeleine."

"Yes. I heard from Nucingen of the big affair that the firm of Claparon is negotiating."

"Well," the perfumer went on, "a loan of a hundred thousand francs, secured on my share of the land, or on my business, would suffice to tide me over until I can touch the profits which must shortly accrue from a venture in my own way of

business. If necessary, I would cover the amount by bills drawn on a new firm—Popinot & Company, a young house which——"

Keller seemed to be very little interested in this description of the firm of Popinot, and Birotteau gathered that he had somehow taken a wrong turn; he stopped; then, in dismay at the pause, he went on again.

"As for the interest, we——"

"Yes, yes," said the banker; "the thing may be arranged, and do not doubt my desire to meet you in the matter. Occupied as I am, I have all the finances of Europe on my hands, and the Chamber absorbs every moment of my time, so you will not be surprised to hear that I leave the investigation of a great amount of regular business to my managers. Go downstairs, and see my brother Adolphe; explain the nature of your guarantees to him; and if he assents, return here with him to-morrow or the day after, at the time when I look into affairs of this kind, at five o'clock in the morning. We shall be proud and happy to receive your confidence; you are one of the consistent Royalists; and your esteem is the more flattering, since that politically we may find ourselves at enmity."

"Sir," said the perfumer, elated by this oratorical flourish, "I am as deserving of the honor you do me as of the signal mark of Royal favor . . . not unmerited by the discharge of my functions at the Consular Tribunal, and by fighting for——"

"Yes," continued the banker, "the reputation which you enjoy is a passport, M. Birotteau. You are sure to propose a thing that is not feasible, and you can reckon upon our co-operation."

A door, which Birotteau had not noticed, was opened, and a woman entered; it was Mme. Keller, one of the two daughters of the Comte de Gondreville, a peer of France.

"I hope I shall see you, dear, before you go to the Chamber," said she.

"It is two o'clock," exclaimed the banker; "the battle has begun. Excuse me, sir,—the question is one of upsetting a

ministry——" he went as far as the door of the salon the perfumer, and bade a man in livery, "Take this gentleman to M. Adolphe."

Birotteau traversed a labyrinth of staircases on the way to a private office, less sumptuous than the cabinet of the head of the firm, but more business-like in appearance; he was borne along by an *if*, that easiest pacing mount that hope can furnish; he stroked his chin, and thought that the great man's compliments augured excellently well for his plans. It was regrettable that a man so amiable, so capable, so great an orator, should be inimical to the Bourbons.

Still full of these illusions, he entered M. Adolphe Keller's sanctum, a bare, chilly-looking room. Dingy curtains hung in the windows, the floor was covered with a much-worn carpet, and the furniture consisted of a couple of cylinder desks and one or two office chairs. This cabinet was to the first as the kitchen to the dining-room, as the factory to the shop. Here matters of business were penetrated to the core, here enterprises were analyzed, and preliminary charges levied by the bank on all promising undertakings. Here originated all those bold strokes for which the Kellers were so well known in the highest commercial regions, when they would secure and rapidly exploit a monopoly in a few days. Here, too, omissions on the part of the legislature received careful attention, and unblushing demands were made for "sops in the pan" (in the language of the Stock Exchange), that is to say, for money paid in consideration for small indefinable services, for standing godfather to an infant enterprise, and so accrediting it. Here were woven those tissues of fraud after a legal pattern, which consist in investing money as a sleeping-partner in some concern in temporary difficulties, with a view to slaughtering the affair as soon as it succeeds; the brothers would lie in wait, call in their capital at a critical moment, an ugly manœuvre that put the whole thing in their own hands, and involved the hapless active partner in their toils.

The two brothers adopted separate *rôles*. On high stood

ois, the politician, the man of brilliant parts; he bore
lf like a king, he distributed favors and promises, he
himself agreeable to every one. Everything was easy
you spoke with him; he did business royally; he poured
he heady wine of fair words, which intoxicated inexperi-
d speculators and promoters of new schemes; he devel-
their own ideas for them. But Adolphe below absolv
his brother on the score of political preoccupations, and
rly raked in the winnings; he was the responsible brother,
ne who was hard to persuade; so that there were two
ls to every bargain concluded with that treacherous house,
not seldom the gracious Yes of the sumptuous cabinet
transmuted into a dry No in Adolphe's office.

This manœuvre of delay gained time for reflection, and
served to amuse less skilful competitors.

Adolphe Keller was chatting with the famous Palma, the
d counselor of the house, who withdrew as Birotteau
n. The perfumer explained his errand; and Adolphe,
ore cunning of the two brothers, lynx-natured, keen-
thin-lipped, hard-favored, listened to him with lowered
watching the applicant over his spectacles, eyeing him
le with what must be called the banker's gaze, in which
is something of the vulture, something of the attorney;
e at once covetous and cold, clear and inscrutable, sombre
blaze with light.

"Will you be so good as to send me the documents rela-
to this Madeleine affair," said he, "since therein lies the
antee of the account; they must be examined into before
gin to discuss the case on its merits. If the affair is
factory, we might possibly, to avoid encumbering you, be
nt to take part of the profits instead of discount."

"Come," said Birotteau to himself, as he went home again,
see his drift. Like the hunted beaver, I must part with
of my skin. It is better to loose your fleece than to lose
life."

He went upstairs in high spirits, and his mirth had a genu-
ine ring.

"I am saved," he told Césarine; "Keller will open a loan account with me."

But not until the 29th of December could Birotteau gain admittance a second time to Adolphe Keller's office. On the occasion of his first call, Adolphe was six leagues away from Paris, looking at some property which the great orator had a mind to buy. The next time both the Kellers were closeted together, and could see no one that morning; it was a question of a tender for a loan proposed by the Chambers, and they begged M. Birotteau to return on the following Friday. These delays were heartbreaking to the perfumer; but Friday came at last, and Birotteau sat by the fire in the office, with the daylight falling full on his face, and Adolphe Keller, sitting opposite, was saying, as he held up the notarial deeds, "These are all right, sir; but what proportion of the purchase-money have you paid?"

"A hundred and forty thousand francs."

"In money?"

"In bills.

"Have they been met?"

"They have not fallen due."

"But suppose that you have given more for the land than it is actually worth (taking it at its present value), where is our guarantee? We should have no security but the good opinion which you inspire and the esteem in which you are held. Business is not based on sentiment. If you had paid two hundred thousand francs, supposing that you have given too much by a hundred thousand francs to get possession of the land, we should in that case have at any rate a guarantee of a hundred thousand francs for the hundred thousand you want to borrow. The result for us would be that we should be owners of the land in your place, by paying your share; in that case we must know if it is a good piece of business. For if we are to wait five years to double our capital, it would be better to put the money out to interest through the bank. So many things may happen. You want to draw an accommodation bill to meet your bills when they fall due? It is a

risky thing to do! You go back to take a leap better. This is not in our way of business."

For Birotteau, it was as if the executioner had touched his shoulder with the branding-iron. He lost his head.

"Let us see," said Adolphe, "my brother takes a warm interest in you; he spoke of you to me. Let us look into your affairs," he added, and he glanced at the perfumer with the expression of a courtesan pressed for a quarter's rent.

Birotteau became a Molineux, and acted the part of the man at whom he had laughed so loftily. Kept in play by the banker, who took a pleasure in unwinding the skein of the poor man's thoughts, and showed himself as expert in the art of examining a merchant as the elder Popinot was skilled in unloosing a criminal's tongue, César told the story of his business career; he brought the Pâte des Sultanes and the Toilet Lotion upon the scene; he gave a complete account of his dealings with Roguin, and, finally, of the lawsuit with regard to that mortgage from which he had reaped no benefit. He saw Keller's musing smile and jerk of the head from time to time, and said to himself, "He is giving an ear to me! He is interested; I shall have my loan!" and Adolphe Keller was laughing at Birotteau, as Birotteau himself had laughed at Molineux. Carried away by the impulse of loquacity peculiar to those people on whom misfortune has an intoxicating effect, César showed himself as he really was; he helped the banker to take his measure when he suggested as his final expedient the Cephalic Oil and the firm of Popinot by way of a guarantee. Led away by a delusive hope, he allowed Adolphe Keller to fathom him and examine into his affairs, until Adolphe Keller saw in the man before him a Royalist blockhead on the brink of bankruptcy. Then, delighted at the prospect of this failure of the deputy-mayor of his arrondissement, of a man whose party was in power, who had been but lately decorated, Adolphe told Birotteau plainly that he could neither open a loan account with him, nor speak on his behalf to the orator brother, the great François. If François were inclined to extend an imbecile gener-

osity to a political adversary, and to come to the aid of a man who held opinions diametrically opposed to his own, he, Adolphe, had no mind that his brother should be a dupe; he would do all that in him lay to prevent his brother from holding out a helping hand to one of Napoleon's old antagonists, to a man who was wounded at Saint-Roch. Birotteau, exasperated at this, tried to say something about covetousness in the high places of the financial world, of hard-heartedness and sham philanthropy; but he was overcome with such terrible distress, that he could scarcely stammer out a few words about the institution of the Bank of France, to which the Kellers had recourse.

"But the Bank of France will never make an advance which a private bank declines," said Adolphe Keller.

"It has always seemed to me," said Birotteau, "that the Bank was not fulfilling the purpose for which it was established, when the governors congratulate themselves on a balance-sheet in which they have only lost one or two hundred thousand francs in transactions with the mercantile world of Paris; it is the province of the Bank to watch over and foster trade."

Adolphe began to smile, and rose to his feet like a man who is bored.

"If the Bank began to finance all the men in difficulties on 'Change, where rascality congregates in the slipperiest places of the financial world, the Bank would file her schedule before a year was out. The Bank is hard put to it as it is to guard against accommodation bills and fraudulent letters of exchange, and how would it be possible to examine into the affairs of every one who should be minded to apply for assistance?"

"I want ten thousand francs for to-morrow, Saturday the 30th; and where are they to come from?" Birotteau asked himself, as he crossed the court.

When the 31st is a holiday, payment is due on the 30th, according to custom. César's eyes were so full of tears that, as he reached the great gateway, he scarcely saw a handsome

English horse, covered with foam, that pulled up sharply at the gate, and one of the neatest cabriolets to be seen in the streets of Paris. He would fain have been run over by the cabriolet; it would be an accidental death, and the confusion in his affairs would have been set down to the suddenness of the catastrophe. He did not recognize du Tillet's slender figure in faultless morning dress, or see him fling the reins to a servant and put a rug over the back of the thoroughbred.

"What brings *you* here?" asked du Tillet, addressing his old master.

Du Tillet knew quite well why Birotteau had come. The Kellers had made inquiries of Claparon, and Claparon, taking his cue from du Tillet, had blighted the perfumer's old-established business reputation. The tears in the unlucky merchant's eyes told the tale sufficiently plainly, in spite of his sudden effort to keep them back.

"Perhaps you have been asking these Turks to oblige you in some way," said du Tillet, "cut-throats of commerce that they are, who have played many a mean trick; they will make a corner in indigo, for instance; they lower rice, forcing holders to sell cheap, so that they can get the game into their own hands and control the market; they are inhuman pirates, who know neither law, nor faith, nor conscience. You cannot know what things they are capable of doing. They will open a loan account with you if you have some promising bit of business; and as soon as you have gone too far to draw back, they will pull you up and put pressure upon you till you make the whole affair over to them for next to nothing. Pretty stories they could tell you at Havre and Bordeaux and Marseilles about the Kellers! Politics are a cloak that cover a lot of dirty doings, I can tell you! So I make them useful without scruple. Let us take a turn or two, my dear Birotteau. Joseph, walk the horse up and down, he is overheated, and a thousand crowns is a big investment in horse-flesh."

He turned towards the Boulevard.

"Now, my dear master (for you used to be my master), is it money that you need? And they have asked you for secur-

ity, the wretches! Well, for my own part, I know you; and I can offer to give you cash against your bills. I have made my money honorably, and with unheard-of toil. I went in quest of fortune to Germany! At this time of day, I may tell you this—that I bought up the King's debts there for forty per cent of their value; your guarantee was very useful to me then, and I am grateful. If you want ten thousand francs, they are at your service."

"What! du Tillet," cried César, "do you really mean it? Are you not making game of me? Yes, I am a little pressed for money, just for the moment——"

"I know: Roguin's affair," returned du Tillet. "Eh! yes. I myself have been let in there for ten thousand francs, which the old rogue borrowed of me to run away with; but Mme Roguin will repay the money out of her claims on his estate. I advised her, poor thing, not to be so foolish as to give up her fortune to pay debts contracted for a mistress; it would be very well if she could pay them all, but how is she to make distinctions in favor of this or that creditor, to the prejudice of others? You are no Roguin; I know you," continued du Tillet; "you would rather blow your brains out than cause me to lose a sou. Here we are in the Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin; come up and see me."

It pleased the young upstart to take his old employer, not through the offices, but by way of the private entry, and to walk deliberately, so as to give him a full view of a handsome and luxuriously furnished dining-room, adorned with pictures bought in Germany; through two drawing-rooms, more splendid and elegant than any rooms that Birotteau had yet seen save in the Duc de Lenoncourt's house. The good citizen was dazzled by the gilding, the works of art, the costly knickknacks, precious vases, and countless little details. All the glories of Constance's rooms paled before this display, and knowing, as he did, the cost of his own extravagance—"Where can he have found all these millions?" said he to himself.

Then they entered a bedroom, which as much surpassed his

afe's as the mansion of a great singer at the Opéra surasses the third-floor dwelling of some supernumerary. The ceiling was covered with violet satin relieved with silken folds of white, and the white fur of an ermine rug beside the bed brought out in contrast all the violet tints of a carpet from the Levant. The furniture and the accessories were novel in form, and exhibited the very refinement of extravagance. Birotteau stopped in front of an exquisite timepiece, with a Cupid and Psyche upon it, a replica of one which had just been made for a celebrated banker. At length master and assistant reached a cabinet, the dainty sanctum of a fashionable dandy, redolent rather of love than of finance. It was Mme. Roguin, doubtless, who, in her gratitude for the care and thought given to her fortune, had bestowed, by way of a thank-offering, the paper-cutter of wrought gold, the carved malachite paper-weights, and all the costly gewgaws of unbridled luxury. The carpet, one of the richest products of the Belgian loom, was as great a surprise to the eyes as its soft, thick pile to the tread. Du Tillet drew a chair to the fire for the poor dazzled and bewildered perfumer.

"Will you breakfast with me?" He rang the bell; it was answered by a servant, who was better dressed than the visitor.

"Ask M. Legras to come up, and then tell Joseph to return, you will find him at the door of Keller's bank; and you can go to Adolphe Keller's house, and say that instead of seeing him now, I shall wait till he goes on 'Change. Send up breakfast, and be quick about it."

This talk dazed the perfumer.

"So he, du Tillet, makes that formidable Adolphe Keller come to him at his whistle, as if he were a dog!"

A hop-o'-my-thumb of a page came in and spread a table so slender, that it had escaped Birotteau's notice, setting thereon a Strasbourg pie, a bottle of Bordeaux wine, and various luxuries which did not appear on Birotteau's table twice in a quarter, on high days and holidays. Du Tillet was enjoying himself. His feeling of hatred for the one man who

had a right to despise him diffused itself like a warm glow through his veins, till the sight of Birotteau stirred in the depths of his nature the same sensations that the spectacle of a sheep struggling for its life against a tiger might give. A generous thought flashed across him; he asked himself whether he had not carried his vengeance far enough; he hesitated between the counsels of a newly-awakened pity and those of a late grown drowsy.

"Commercially speaking, I can annihilate the man," he thought: "I have power of life and death over him, over his wife, who kept me on the rack, and his daughter, whose hand once seemed to me to grasp a whole fortune. I have his money as it is, so let us be content to let the poor simpleton swim to the end of his tether, which I shall hold."

But honest folk are wanting in tact; they do what seems good to them without calculating its effect on others, because they themselves are straightforward, and have no afterthoughts. So Birotteau filled up the measure of his own misfortune: he irritated the tiger; all unwittingly he sent a shaft home, and made an implacable enemy of him at a word, by his praise, by giving expression to his honest thoughts, by the sheer light-heartedness which is the gift of a blameless conscience. The cashier came in; and du Tillet said, looking towards César, "M. Legras, bring me ten thousand francs in cash, and a bill for the amount payable to my order in ninety days by this gentleman, who is M. Birotteau, as you know."

Du Tillet waited on his guest, and poured out a glass of Bordeaux wine for him; and Birotteau, who thought himself saved, laughed convulsively, fingered his watch-chain, and did not touch the food until his ex-assistant said, "You do not eat." In this way he laid bare the depths of the gulf into which du Tillet's hand had plunged him, while the hand which had drawn him out was still stretched over him, and might yet plunge him back again. When the cashier returned, and the bill had been accepted, and César felt the ten bank-notes in his pocket, he could no longer contain his joy. But a moment ago the news that he could not meet his engagements

emed to be about to be published abroad through his Quar-
r, the Bank must know it, he must confess that he was
ined to his wife; now everything was safe! The joy of his
liverance was as keen as the torture of impending bank-
otcy had been. Tears filled the poor man's eyes in spite of
mself.

"What can be the matter, my dear master?" asked du Til-
"Would you not do to-morrow for me what I am doing
day for you? Isn't is as simple as saying good-day?"

"Du Tillet," said the worthy man, with solemn emphasis,
he rose and took his ex-assistant by the hand, "I restore you
to your old place in my esteem."

"What! had I forfeited it?" asked du Tillet; and, for all
is prosperity, he felt this rude home-thrust, and his color
rose.

"Forfeited . . . not exactly that," said Birotteau,
thunderstruck by his folly; "people talked about you and
Mme. Roguin. The devil! another man's wife . . ."

"You are beating about the bush, old boy," thought du Til-
t, in an old phrase learned in his earlier days.

And even as that thought crossed his mind, he returned
to his old design. He would lay this virtue low, he would
trample it under foot; all Paris should point the finger of
orn at the honest and honorable man who had caught him,
u Tillet, with his hand in the till. Every hatred of every
nd, political or private, between woman and woman, or
tween man and man, dates from some similar detection.
There is no cause for hate in compromised interests, in a
ound, nor even in a box on the ear; such injuries as these
not irreparable. But to be found out in some base piece
iniquity, to be caught in the act! . . . The duel that
ues between the criminal and the discoverer of the crime
nnot but be to the death.

"Oh! Mme. Roguin," said du Tillet laughingly, "but isn't
at rather a feather in a young man's cap? I understand
ou, my dear master, they must have told you that she lent me
oney. Well, on the contrary, it is I who have re-established

her finances, which were curiously involved in her husband's affairs. My fortune has been honestly made, as I have just told you. I had nothing, as you know. Young men sometimes find themselves in terrible straits, and in dire need one may strain a point; but if, like the Republic, one has made a forced loan now and again, why, one returns it afterwards, and is as honest as France herself."

"Just so," said César. "My boy—God—Isn't it Voltaire who says:

"He made of repentance the virtue of mortals?"

"So long as one does not take his neighbor's money in a base and cowardly way," du Tillet continued, smarting once more under this application of verse; "as if you, for instance, were to fail before the three months are out, and it would be all up with my ten thousand francs——"

"I fail?" cried Birotteau (he had taken three glasses of wine, and happiness had gone to his head). "My opinions of bankruptcy are well known. A failure is commercial death. I should die."

"Long life to you!" said du Tillet.

"To your prosperity!" returned the perfumer. "Why do you not come to me for your perfumery?"

"Upon my word," said du Tillet, "I confess that I am afraid to meet Mme. César, she always made an impression upon me; and if you were not my master, faith, I——"

"Oh! you are not the first who has thought her handsome, and wanted her, but she loves me! Well, du Tillet, my friend, do not do things by halves."

"What!"

Birotteau explained the affair of the building-land, and du Tillet opened his eyes, complimented César upon his acumen and foresight, and spoke highly of the prospects.

"Oh, well, I am much pleased to have your approbation; you are supposed to have one of the longest heads in the banking line, du Tillet! You can negotiate a loan from the Bank of France for me until the Cephalic Oil has made its way."

"I can send you to the firm of Nucingen," answered du Tillet, inwardly vowing that his victim should dance the whole mazy round of bankruptcy. He sat down to his desk to write the following letter to the Baron de Nucingen:

"My dear Baron,—The bearer of this letter is M. César Birotteau, deputy-mayor of the second arrondissement, and one of the best known manufacturing perfumers in Paris. He desires to be put in communication with you; you need not hesitate to do anything that he asks of you, and by obliging him you oblige your friend,

"F. du Tillet."

Du Tillet put no dot over the *i* in his name. Among his business associates this clerical error was a sign which they all understood, and it was always made of set purpose; it annulled the heartiest recommendations, the warmest praise and instance in the body of the letter. On receiving such a note as this, where the very exclamation-marks breathed entreaty, in which du Tillet, figuratively speaking, went down on his knees, his associates knew that the writer had been unable to refuse the letter which was to be regarded as null and void. At sight of that undotted *i*, the receiver of the letter forthwith dismissed the applicant with empty compliments and vain promises. Not a few men of considerable reputation in the world are put off like children by this trick; for men of business, bankers, bill-discounters, and advocates have one and all two methods of signing their names; one is a dead letter, the other living. The shrewdest are deceived by it. You must have felt the double effect of a cold communication and a warm one to discover the stratagem.

"You are saving me, du Tillet," said César, as he read the present specimen.

"Oh dear me," said du Tillet, "just ask Nucingen for the money, and when he has read my letter he will let you have all that you want. Unluckily, my own capital is locked up at present, or I would not send you to the prince of bankers,

for the Kellers are dwarfs compared with Nucingen. He is a second Law. With my bill of exchange, you will be ready for the 15th, and after that we will see. Nucingen and I are the best friends in the world; he would not disoblige me for a million."

"It is as good as a guarantee," said Birotteau to himself, and as he went away his heart thrilled with gratitude for du Tillet. "Ah, well," he thought, "a good deed never loses its reward," and he fell incontinently to moralizing. Yet there was one bitter drop in his cup of happiness. He had, it is true, prevented his wife from looking into the ledgers for several days. Célestin must undertake the bookkeeping in addition to his work, with some help from his master; he could have wished his wife and daughter to remain upstairs in possession of the beautiful rooms which he had arranged and furnished for them; but when the first little glow of enjoyment was over, Mme. César would have died sooner than renounce the personal supervision of the details of the business, "the handle of the frying-pan," to use her own expression.

Birotteau was at his wits' end; he had done everything that he could think of to conceal the symptoms of his embarrassment from her eyes. Constance had strongly disapproved of sending in the accounts; she had scolded the assistants, and asked Célestin if he meant to ruin the house, believing that the idea was Célestin's own. And Célestin meekly bore the blame by Birotteau's orders. In the assistant's opinion, Mme. César governed the perfumer; and though it is possible to deceive the public, those of the household always know who is the real power in it. The confession was bound to come, and that soon, for du Tillet's loan would appear in the books, and must be accounted for.

As Birotteau came in at the door he saw, not without a shudder, that Constance was at her post, going through the amounts due to be paid, and doubtless balancing the books.

"How will you pay these to-morrow?" she asked in his ear, when he took his place beside her.

"With money," he replied, drawing the banknotes from his pocket, with a sign to Célestin to take them.

"But where do those notes come from?"

"I will tell you the whole story to-night.—Célestin, enter in the bill-book a bill for ten thousand francs due at the end of March, to order of du Tillet."

"Du Tillet!" echoed Constance, terror-stricken.

"I am just going to Popinot," said César. "It is too bad of me; I have not been round to see him yet. Is his oil selling?"

"The three hundred bottles which he brought are all sold out."

"Birotteau, do not go out again; I have something to say to you," said Constance. She caught her husband's arm, and drew him to her room in a hurry, which, under any other circumstances, would have been ludicrous.—"Du Tillet!" she exclaimed, when the husband and wife were together, and she had made sure that there was no one but Césarine present; "Du Tillet robbed us of three thousand francs! And you are doing business with du Tillet! A monster who—who tried to seduce me," she said in his ear.

"A bit of boyish folly," said Birotteau, suddenly transformed into a free thinker.

"Listen to me, Birotteau; you are falling out of your old ways; you never go to the factory now. There is something, I can feel it. Tell me about it; I want to know everything."

"Well, then," said Birotteau, "we have nearly been ruined; we were ruined, in fact, this very morning, but everything is set straight again," and he told the dreadful story of the past two weeks.

"So that was the cause of your illness!" exclaimed Constance.

"Yes, mamma," cried Césarine. "Father has been very brave, I am sure. If I were loved as he loves you, I would not wish more. He thought of nothing but your trouble."

"My dream has come true," said the poor wife, and pale, haggard, and terror-stricken, she sank down upon the sofa

by the fireside. "I foresaw all this. I told you so that fatal night, in the old room which you have pulled down; we shall have nothing left but our eyes to cry over our losses. Poor Césarine, I——"

"Come, now; so that is what you say!" cried Birotteau. "I stand in need of courage, and are you damping it!"

"Forgive me, dear," said Constance, grasping César's hand in hers, with a tender pressure that went to the poor man's heart. "I was wrong; the misfortune has befallen us, I will be dumb, resigned, and strong to bear it. No, César, you shall never hear a complaint from me."

She sprang into César's arms, and said, while her tears fell fast, "Take courage, dear. I should have courage enough for two, if it were needed."

"There is the Oil, dear wife; the Oil will save us."

"May God protect us!" cried Constance.

"Will not Anselme come to father's assistance?" asked Césarine.

"I will go to him now," exclaimed César, his wife's heart-breaking tone had been too much for his feelings; it seemed that he did not know her yet, after nineteen years of married life. "Do not be afraid, Constance; there is no fear now. Here, read M. du Tillet's letter to M. de Nucingen; he is sure to lend us the money. Between then and now I shall have gained my lawsuit. Besides," he added (a lying hope to fit the circumstances), "there is your uncle Pillerault. Courage is all that is wanted."

"If that were all!" said Constance, smiling.

Birotteau, with the great weight taken off his mind, walked like a man set free from prison; but within himself he felt the indefinable exhaustion consequent on mental exertion which has made heavy demands upon the nervous system, and required more than the daily allowance of will-power; he was conscious of the deficit when a man has drawn, as it were, on the capital of his vitality. Birotteau was growing old already.

Popinot's shop in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants had under-

gone great changes in the last two months. It had been repainted. The rows of bottles ensconced in the pigeon-hole shelves, touched up with paint, rejoiced the eyes of every merchant who knows the signs of prosperity. The floor of the shop was covered with packing-paper. The warehouse contained certain casks of oil, for which the devoted Gaudissart had procured an agency for Popinot. The books were kept upstairs in the counting-house. An old servant had been installed as housekeeper to Popinot and his three assistants.

Popinot himself, penned in a cash-desk in the corner of the shop screened off by a glass partition, was usually arrayed in a green baize apron and a pair of green-cloth over-sleeves, when he was not buried, as at this moment, in a pile of papers. The post had just come in, and Popinot, with a pen behind his ear, was taking in handfuls of business letters and orders, when at the words, "Well, my boy?" he raised his head, saw his late employer, locked his cash-desk, and came forward joyously. The tip of the young man's nose was red, for there was no fire in the shop, and the door stood open.

"I began to fear that you were never coming to see me," he answered respectfully.

The assistants hurried in, eager to see the great man of the perfumery trade, their own master's partner, the deputy-mayor who wore the red ribbon. César was flattered by this mute homage, and he who had felt so small in the Kellers' bank must needs imitate the Kellers. He stroked his chin, raised himself on tiptoe once or twice with an air, and poured forth his commonplaces.

"Well, my dear fellow, are you up early in the mornings?" asked he.

"No, we don't always go to bed," said Popinot; "one must succeed by hook or by crook."

"Well, what did I tell you? My Oil is a fortune."

"Yes, sir; but the method of selling it counts for something; I have given your diamond a worthy setting."

"As a matter of fact," said the perfumer, "how are we getting on? Have any profits been made?"

"At the end of a month!" cried Popinot. "Did you expect it? My friend Gaudissart has not been gone much more than three weeks. He took a post-chaise without telling me about it. Oh! he has thrown himself into this. We shall owe a good deal to my uncle! The newspapers will cost us twelve thousand francs," he added in Birotteau's ear.

"The newspapers . . .!" cried the deputy-mayor.

"Have you not seen them?"

"No."

"Then you know nothing of this," said Popinot. "Twenty thousand francs in placards, frames, and prints! . . . A hundred thousand bottles paid for! . . . Oh! it is nothing but sacrifice at this moment. We are bringing out the Oil on a large scale. If you had stepped over to the Faubourg, where I have often been at work all night, you would have seen a little contrivance of mine for cracking the nuts, which is not to be sneezed at. For my own part, during the last five days I have made three thousand francs in commission on the druggists' oils."

"What a good head!" said Birotteau, laying his hand on little Popinot's hair, and stroking it as if the young man had been a little child. "I foresaw how it would be."

Several people came into the shop.

"Good-bye till Sunday; we are going to dine then with your aunt, Mme. Ragon," said Birotteau, and he left Popinot to his own affairs. Evidently the roast which he had scented was not yet ready to carve.—"How extraordinary it is! An assistant becomes a merchant in twenty-four hours," he thought, and Birotteau was as much taken aback by Popinot's prosperity and self-possession as by du Tillet's luxurious rooms. "Here is Anselme drawing himself up a bit when I put my hand on his head, as if he were a François Keller already."

It did not occur to Birotteau that the assistants were looking on, and that the head of an establishment must preserve his dignity in his own house. Here, as in du Tillet's case the good man had made a blunder in the kindness of his

heart, and the real feeling expressed in that homely familiar way would have mortified any one but Anselme.

The Sunday dinner-party at the Ragons' house was destined to be the last festivity in the nineteen years of César's married life, the life which had been so completely happy. The Ragons lived on the second floor of a quaint and rather stately old house in the Rue du Petit-Bourbon-Saint-Sulpice. Over the paneled walls of their rooms danced eighteenth century shepherdesses in hooped petticoats, amid browsing eighteenth century sheep; and the old people themselves belonged to the bourgeoisie of that bygone eighteenth century, with its solemn gravity, its quaint habits and customs, its respectful attitude to the noblesse, its loyal devotion to Church and King.

The timepieces, the linen, the plates and dishes, all the furniture in fact had such an old-world air, that by very reason of its antiquity it seemed new. The sitting-room, hung with brocatelle damask curtains, contained a collection of "duchesse" chairs and what-nots; and from the wall a superb Popinot, Mme. Ragon's father, the alderman of Sancerre, painted by Latour, smiled down upon the room like a parvenu in all his glory. Mme. Ragon at home was incomplete without her tiny King Charles, who reposed with marvelous effect on her hard little *rococo* sofa, a piece of furniture which certainly had never played the part of Crébillon's sofa.

Among the Ragons' many virtues, the possession of old wines arrived at perfect maturity was by no means the least endearing; to say nothing of certain liqueurs of Mme. Anfoux's, brought from the West Indies by the lovely Mme. Ragon's admirers, sufficiently dogged to love on without hope (so it was said). Wherefore the Ragons' little dinners were highly appreciated. Jeannette, the old cook, served the two old folk with a blind devotion; for them she would have stolen fruit to make preserves; and so far from investing her money in the savings-bank, she prudently put it in the lottery, hoping one day to carry home the great prize to her master and mistress. In spite of her sixty years, Jeannette, on Sundays

when they had company, superintended the dishes in the kitchen, and waited at table with a deft quickness which would have given hints to Mlle. Contat as Suzanne in the *Marriage of Figaro.*

This time the guests were ten in number—the elder Popinot, Uncle Pillerault, Anselme, César and his wife and daughter, the three Matifats, and the Abbé Loraux. Mme. Matifat, first introduced arrayed for the dance in her turban, now wore a gown of blue velvet, thick cotton stockings, kid slippers, green-fringed chamois leather gloves, and a hat lined with pink, and adorned with blossoming auriculas.

Every one had arrived by five o'clock. The Ragons used to beg their guests to be punctual; and when the good folk themselves were asked out to dinner, their friends were careful to dine at the same hour, for at the age of seventy the digestion does not take kindly to the new-fangled times and seasons ordained by fashionable society.

Césarine knew that Mme. Ragon would seat Anselme beside her: all women, even devotees, or the feeblest feminine intellects, understand each other in the matter of a love affair. The toilette of the perfumer's daughter was designed to turn young Popinot's head. Constance, who had given up, not without a pang, the idea of the notary, who for her was an heir-presumptive to a throne, had helped Césarine to dress, certain bitter reflections mingling with her thoughts the while. Foreseeing the future, she lowered the modest gauze kerchief somewhat on Césarine's shoulders, so as to display rather more of their outline, as well as the throat on which the young girl's head was set with striking grace. The bodice *à la Grecque*, four or five folds, crossing from left to right, gave short glimpses of delicately rounded contours beneath; and the leaden-gray merino gown, with its flounces trimmed with green ornaments, clearly defined a shape which had never seemed so slender and so lissome. Gold filagree earrings hung from her ears. Her hair, dressed high *à la Chinoise*, was drawn back from her face, so that the delicate freshness of its surface and the dim tracery of the veins which

suffused the white velvet with the purest glow of life, was apparent at a glance. Indeed, Césarine was so coquettishly lovely, that Mme. Matifat could not help saying so, without perceiving that the mother and daughter had felt the necessity of bewitching young Popinot.

Neither Birotteau, nor his wife, nor Mme. Matifat, nor any one else, broke in upon the delicious talk between the two young people; love glowed within them as they spoke with lowered voices in the draughty window-seat, where the cold made a miniature northeaster. Moreover, the conversation of their seniors grew animated when the elder Popinot let something drop concerning Roguin's flight, saying that this was the second notary-defaulter, and that hitherto such a thing had been unknown. Mme. Ragon had touched her brother's foot at the mention of Roguin, Pillerault had spoken aloud to cover the judge's remark, and both looked significantly from him to Mme. Birotteau.

"I know all," Constance said, and in her gentle voice there was a note of pain.

"Oh, well then," said Mme. Matifat, addressing herself to Birotteau, who humbly bent his head, "how much of your money did he run away with? To listen to the gossip, you might be ruined."

"He had two hundred thousand francs of mine. As for the forty thousand which he pretended to borrow for me from one of his clients whose money he had squandered, we are going to law about it."

"You will see that settled this coming week," said the elder Popinot. "I thought that you would not mind my explaining your position to M. le Président; he has ordered Roguin's papers to be brought into the *Chambre de Conseil;* on examination it will be discovered when the lender's capital was embezzled, and Derville's allegations can be proved or disproved. Derville is pleading in person, to save expense to you."

"Shall we gain the day?" asked Mme. Birotteau.

"I do not know," Popinot answered. "Although I belong to the Chamber before which the case will come, I shall re-

frain from deliberating upon it, even if I should be called upon to do so."

"But can there be any doubt about such a straightforward case?" asked Pillerault. "Ought not the deed to state that the money was actually paid down, and must not the notaries declare that they have seen it handed over? Roguin would go to the galleys if he fell into the hands of justice."

"In my opinion," the judge answered, "the lender should look to Roguin's caution-money and the amount paid for the practice for his remedy; but sometimes, in still simpler cases than this, the Councillors at the Court-Royal have been divided six against six."

"What is this, mademoiselle; has M. Roguin run away?" asked Popinot, overhearing at last what was being said. "M. César said nothing about it to me—to me who would give my life for him . . ."

Césarine felt that the whole family was included in that "for him"; for if the girl's inexperience had not understood the tone, she could not mistake the look that wrapped her in a rosy flame.

"I was sure of it; I told him so, but he hid it all from mother, and told his secret to no one but me."

"You spoke to him of me in this matter," said Popinot; "you read my heart, but do you read all that is there?"

"Perhaps."

"Oh! I am very happy," said Popinot. "If you will remove all my fears, in a year's time I shall be so rich that your father will not receive me so badly when I shall speak to him then of our marriage. Five hours of sleep shall be enough for me now of a night . . ."

"Do not make yourself ill," said Césarine, and no words can reproduce the tones of her voice as she gave Popinot a glance wherein all her thoughts might be read.

"Wife," said César, as they rose from table, "I think those young people are in love."

"Oh, well, so much the better," said Constance gravely; "my daughter will be the wife of a man who has a head on his

shoulders and plenty of energy. Brains are the best endowment in a marriage."

She hurried away into Mme. Ragon's room. During dinner, César had let fall several remarks which had drawn a smile from Pillerault and the judge, so plainly did they exhibit the speaker's ignorance; and it was borne in upon the unfortunate woman how little fitted her husband was to struggle with misfortune. Constance's heart was heavy with unshed tears. Instinctively she mistrusted du Tillet, for all mothers understand *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes* without learning Latin. She wept, and her daughter and Mme. Ragon, with their arms about her, could not learn the cause of her trouble.

"It is the nerves," said she.

The rest of the evening was spent over the card-table by the old people, and the younger ones played the blithe childish games styled "innocent amusements," because they cover the innocent mischief of bourgeois lovers. The Matifats joined the young people.

"César," said Constance, as they went home again, "go to M. le Baron de Nucingen some time about the 8th, so as to be sure some days beforehand that you can meet your engagements on the 15th. If there should be any hitch in your arrangements, would you raise a loan one day to pay your debts between one day and the next?"

"I will go, wife," César answered, and he grasped her hand and Césarine's in his as he added, "My darlings, I have given you bitter New Year's gifts!" And in the darkness inside the cab the two women, who could not see the poor perfumer, felt hot tears falling on their hands.

"Hope, dear," said Constance.

"Everything will go well, papa; M. Popinot told me that he would give his life for you."

"For me—and for my family; that is it, is it not?" answered César, trying to speak gaily.

Césarine pressed her father's hand in a way which told him that Anselme was her betrothed.

Two hundred cards arrived for Birotteau on New Year's Day and the two following days. This influx of tokens of favor and of false friendship is a painful thing for people who are being swept away by the current of misfortune. Three times César presented himself at the Baron de Nucingen's hôtel, and each time in vain. The New Year's festivities sufficiently excused the banker's absence. But on the last visit Birotteau went as far as the banker's private office, and learned from a German, the head clerk, that M. de Nucingen had only returned from a ball given by the Kellers at five o'clock that morning, and that he would not be visible until half-past nine. Birotteau chatted with this man for nearly half an hour, and contrived to interest the German in his affairs. So, during the day, this cabinet minister of the house of Nucingen wrote to tell César that the Baron would see him at twelve o'clock the following morning, January the 3d. Although every hour brought its drop of bitterness, that day went by with dreadful swiftness. The perfumer took a cab and drove to the hôtel; the courtyard was already blocked with carriages, and the poor honest man's heart was oppressed by the splendors of that celebrated house.

"Yet he has failed twice," he said to himself, as he went up the handsome staircase, with flowers on either side, and through the luxuriously furnished rooms by which the Baroness, Delphine de Nucingen, had made a name for herself. The Baroness strove to rival the most splendid houses in the Faubourg Saint-Germain—the houses of a circle into which as yet she had no right of entry.

The Baron and his wife were at breakfast. In spite of the number of those who were waiting in his offices for him, he said that he would see du Tillet's friends at any hour. Birotteau trembled with hope at the change which the Baron's message produced on the lackey's insolent face.

"Bardon me, my tear," said the Baron, addressing his wife, as he rose to his feet and bowed slightly to Birotteau, "dees shentleman ees ein goot Royaleest, and de indimate frient of du Dillet. Meinnesir Pirôdôt is teputy-mayor of de Second

Arrontussement, and gifs palls of Asiatic magnificence; you ll make, no doubt, his agquaintance mit bleasure."

"I should be delighted to take lessons of Mme. Birotteau, Ferdinand——" ("Come," thought the perfumer, "she l's him. Ferdinand, plump and plain")—"Ferdinand spoke f the ball to us with an admiration which says the more, be- se Ferdinand is very critical; everything must have been erfect. Shall you soon give another?" asked Mme. de Nucin- n, with a most amiable expression.

"Madame, poor folk like us seldom amuse ourselves," nswered the perfumer, doubtful whether the Baroness was ughing at him, or if her words were simply an empty com- pliment.

"Meinnesir Crintod suberindended de alderations in your house," said the Baron.

"Oh! Grindot! is he that nice young architect who has just me back from Rome?" asked Delphine de Nucingen. "I am uite wild about him; he is making lovely sketches for my lum."

No conspirator in the hands of the executioner in the tor- ture chamber of the Venetian Republic could have felt less t his ease in the boots than Birotteau in his ordinary clothes t that moment. Every word had for him an ironical sound.

"Ve too gif liddle palls here," the Baron continued, giving the visitor a searching glance. "Eferypody does it, you see!"

"Will M. Birotteau join us at breakfast?" asked Delphine, and indicated the luxuriously-furnished table.

"I am here on business, Mme. la Baronne, and——"

"Yes!" said the Baron, "matame, vill you bermit us to talk pizness?"

Delphine made a little gesture of assent. "Are you about to buy some perfumery?" she asked of the Baron, who hrugged his shoulders, and turned in despair to César.

"Du Dillet take de greatest inderest in you," said he.

"At last we are coming to the point," thought the hapless merchant.

"Mit his ledder, your gretid mit my house is only limited py de pounds of my own fortune . . ."

The life-giving draught which the angel bore to Hagar in the wilderness must surely have been like the dew which these outlandish words effused through Birotteau's veins. The cunning Baron clung of set purpose to the horrible accent of the German Jew, who flatters himself that he has mastered an alien tongue; for this system led to misapprehensions highly useful to him in the way of business.

"And you shall have ein gurrent aggount, dat is how we vill do it," remarked the good, the great, and venerable financier, with Alsatian geniality.

Birotteau's doubts were all laid to rest; he had had experience of business, and he knew that a man never goes into details unless he is disposed to oblige you and to carry out a plan.

"I neet not say to you that the Pank demands dree zignatures off eferypody, gif de amount is large or small. So you shall make all your pills to de order off our friend du Dillet, who vill send dem de same day to de Pank mit my zignature, and py four o'glock you shall have de amount of de pills dat you haf accept in de morning, and at Pank rate. I do not vant gommission nor discount—nor nossing; for I shall haf de bleasure of peing agreeable to you. . . . But I make one gondition!" he added, touching his nose with the forefinger of his left hand, and putting an indescribable cunning into the gesture.

"It is granted before you ask it, M. le Baron," said Birotteau, imagining that the banker meant to stipulate for a share in the profits.

"Ein gondition to vich I addach de greatest price, because I should like Montame de Nichinguenne to take, as she has said, some lessons of Montame Pirôdôt."

"M. le Baron, do not laugh at me, I beg."

"Meinnesir Pirôdôt," said the financier seriously, "it is an agreement; you are to infite us to your next pall. My wife ischealous; she would like to see your house, of vich eferypody says such great dings."

"M. le Baron!"

"Oh! if you refuse me, no loan aggount! You are in great favor. Yes! I know dat de Brefect of de Seine was go to you."

"M. le Baron!"

"You had La Pillartière, ein shentleman-in-ordinary to de King; and de goot Fentéheine, for you were wounded—at Sainte——"

"On the 13th of Vendémiaire, M. le Baron."

"You had Meinnesir de Lassebette, Meinnesir Fauqueleine of de Agademie——"

"M. le Baron!"

"Eh! *der teufel,* do not be so modest, Meester Teputy-Mayor; I haf heard dat de King said dat your pall——"

"The King?" asked Birotteau, destined to learn no more, for at this moment a young man came into the room; the sound of his footsteps, heard at a distance, had brought a bright color into Delphine de Nucingen's fair face.

"Goot-tay, my tear de Marsay," said the Baron. "Take my blace; dere are a lot ' beoples in my office, dey say. Who knows why? De Mines of Wortschinne are baying two hunderd ber cent! Yes. I have receifed de aggounts. You haf a hunderd tousand francs more of ingom dis year, Montame de Nichinguenne; you could buy girdles and kew-kaws to make yourself pretty, as if you neeted dem!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Birotteau. "The Ragons have sold their shares!"

"Who may these gentlemen be?" asked the young dandy with a smile.

"Dere!" said Nucingen, who had gone as far as the door already, "it looks to me as if dose bersons. . . . Te Marsay, dis is Meinnesir Pirôdôt, your berfumer, who gifs palls mit Asiatic magnificence, and has been degoraded py de King——"

De Marsay, taking up his eyeglass, remarked, "Ah! to be sure. I thought that the face was familiar. Then are you about to perfume your affairs with some efficacious oil, to make them run smoothly?"

"Ach! vell, dose Rakkons had an aggount mit me," the Baron went on. "I put dem in de vay of ein fortune, and dey could not vait one more day for it."

"M. le Baron!" cried Birotteau.

The worthy perfumer found himself very much in the dark about his affairs, and fled after the banker without taking leave of the Baroness or of de Marsay. M. de Nucingen was on the lowest step of the stairs, but even as he reached the door of his office, Birotteau was beside him. As he turned the handle, he saw the despairing gesture of the poor creature, for whom the gulf was yawning, and said:

"Eh! it is understood, is it not? See du Dillet, and arranche it all mit him."

It occurred to Birotteau that de Marsay might have some influence with the Baron; he darted upstairs with the speed of a swallow, and slipped into the dining-room where, by rights, the Baroness and de Marsay should have been, for he had left Delphine waiting for her coffee and cream. The coffee indeed was now waiting, but the Baroness and the young dandy had vanished; the servant looked amused at Birotteau's astonishment, and there was nothing for it but to go more leisurely downstairs again. From the Nucingens' hôtel he went at once to du Tillet, only to hear that he was at Mme. Roguin's house in the country. He took a cab, and paid an extra fare to be driven to Nogent-sur-Marne as quickly as if he had traveled post. But at Nogent-sur-Marne the porter told him that *Monsieur and Madame* had set out for Paris, and Birotteau returned quite tired out.

When he told his wife and daughter the story of his excursion, he was amazed to receive the sweetest consolation and assurances that all would go well from Constance, who had always taken all the little ups and downs of business as occasions on which to utter her boding cries.

At seven o'clock the next morning, Birotteau took up his position before du Tillet's door in the dim light. He begged the porter to put him into communication with du Tillet's man, and, by dint of slipping ten francs into the porter's

hands, obtained the favor of an interview with du Tillet's man; of him he asked to give him an interview with du Tillet as soon as du Tillet should be visible, and to that end a couple of gold pieces found their way into the possession of du Tillet's man. By way of these little sacrifices and great humiliations, common to courtiers and petitioners, he attained his end. At half-past eight, when his ex-assistant had slipped on a dressing-gown and shaken off the confused ideas of a man awakened from sleep, had yawned, stretched himself, and asked pardon of his old master, Birotteau found himself face to face with the tiger thirsting for revenge, the man whom he was fain to consider as his one friend in the world.

"Do not mind me," said Birotteau, replying to the apology.

"What do you want, *my good César?*" asked du Tillet; and César, not without terrible palpitations, gave the Baron de Nucingen's answer and demands to an inattentive listener, who looked about for the bellows, and scolded his manservant for taking so long over lighting the fire.

César did not notice at first that if the master was not heedful, the man was interested; but seeing this at last, he grew confused and broke off, to begin again, spurred on by a "Go on, go on; I am listening," from the abstracted banker.

The good man's shirt was soaked with perspiration, which turned icy cold when du Tillet looked full and steadily at him, and he could see those eyes of silver streaked with a few gold threads; there was a diabolical light in them which pierced him to the heart.

"My dear master, the Bank refused your paper, passed on to Gigonnet *without guarantee* by the firm of Claparon; is that my fault? What! you have been a judge at the Consular Tribunal, how could you make such blunders? I am, before all things, a banker. I will give you my money, but I could not expose my signature to a refusal from the Bank. I live by credit. So do we all. Do you want money?"

"Can you let me have all that I need in cash?"

"That depends upon the amount to be paid. How much do you want?"

"Thirty thousand francs."

"Plenty of chimney-pots tumbling about my ears!" exclaimed du Tillet, and he burst into a laugh.

The perfumer, misled by the splendor of du Tillet's surroundings, chose to regard that laugh as a sign that the sum was a mere trifle. He breathed again. Du Tillet rang the bell.

"Tell the cashier to come up."

"He is not here yet, sir," the servant answered.

"Those rogues are laughing at me! It is half-past eight; they ought to have done a million francs' worth of business by now."

Five minutes later, M. Legras came upstairs.

"How much have we in the safe?"

"Only twenty thousand francs. Your orders were to buy thirty thousand livres per annum in *rentes,* at present price, payable on the 15th."

"That is right; I am still asleep."

The cashier gave Birotteau a sly glance, and went.

"If truth were banished from the earth, she would leave her last word with a cashier," said du Tillet. "But have you not an interest in little Popinot's business, now that he has just set up for himself?" he added, after a horrible pause, in which the sweat gathered in drops on Birotteau's forehead.

"Yes," said César innocently. "Do you think you could discount his signature for a fair amount?"

"Bring me fifty thousand francs' worth of his acceptances, and I will get them negotiated for you at a reasonable rate by one Gobseck; very easy to do business with when he has plenty of capital on his hands, and he has a good deal just now."

Birotteau went home again heartbroken. He did not see that bankers and bill-discounters were sending him backwards and forwards in a game of battledore and shuttlecock; but Constance guessed even then that it would be impossible to obtain a loan of any sort. If three bankers had already re-

fused credit to a man as well known as the deputy-mayor, every one would hear of it, and the Bank of France was no longer to be thought of.

"Try to renew" (this was Constance's advice). "Go to your co-associate, M. Claparon, to every one, in fact, whose bills fall due on the 15th, and ask them to renew. There will be time enough then to go to bill-discounters with Popinot's bills."

"To-morrow will be the 13th!" exclaimed Birotteau, worn out with anxiety.

He was "endowed with a sanguine temperament," to quote his own prospectus; a temperament upon which the wear and tear of emotion and of thought tells so enormously, that sleep is imperatively needed to repair the waste. Césarine brought her father into the drawing-room, and played *Rousseau's Dream,* that charming composition of Hérold's, while Constance was sewing by her husband's side. The poor man lay back on the ottoman couch. Every time his eyes rested on his wife he saw a sweet smile on her lips, and so he fell asleep.

"Poor man," said Constance. "What torture is in store for him! . . . If only he can endure it!"

"Oh, mamma, what is it?" asked Césarine, seeing her mother in tears.

"I see bankruptcy ahead, darling. If your father is obliged to file his schedule, there must be no asking for pity of any one. You must be prepared to be an ordinary shop-girl, my dear. If I see you doing your part bravely, I shall have strength to begin life again. I know your father; he will not keep back one farthing: I shall give up my claims, all that we have will be sold. Take your clothes and trinkets to-morrow to Uncle Pillerault: you are not bound to lose anything, my child."

At these words, spoken with such devout sincerity, Césarine's terror knew no bounds. She thought of going to Anselme, but a feeling of delicacy withheld her.

The next morning found Birotteau in the Rue de Provence

at nine o'clock. He had fallen a victim to fresh anxieties of a totally different kind. To borrow money is not necessarily a complicated process in business; it is a matter of daily occurrence, for capital must always be found wherever a new enterprise is started; but to ask a man to renew a bill is in commercial circles what the Police Court is to the Court of Assize; it is a first step to bankruptcy, even as a misdemeanor is half-way to a crime. The secret of your weakness and your embarrassment passes out of your own keeping. A merchant delivers himself up, bound hand and foot, to another merchant, and charity is not a virtue much practised on the Stock Exchange.

The perfumer, who hitherto had walked the streets of Paris with bright confident eyes, now cast down by doubts, hesitated to go to Claparon; he was beginning to understand that with bankers the heart is merely a portion of the internal economy. Claparon had seemed to him so brutal in his coarse hilarity, and he had felt so much vulgarity in the man, that he shrank from approaching this creditor.

"He is nearer the people, perhaps he will have more soul!" This was the first word of accusation which the anguish of his position wrung from him.

César glanced up at the windows, and at the green curtains yellowed by the sun; then he drew the last of his stock of courage up from the depths of his soul, and climbed the stairs that led to a shabby mezzanine floor. He read the word *Office*, engraven in black letters on an oval brass-plate upon the door, and knocked. No one answered, so he went in.

The whole place was something more than humble; it savored of dire poverty, avarice, or neglect. No clerk showed his face behind a barrier of unpainted deal, surmounted at elbow height by a brass wire lattice, an arrangement which screened off an inner space occupied by tables and desks of blackened wood. Scattered about the deserted offices lay inkstands, in which mold was growing, quill-pens touzled like a street urchin's head, twisted up into suns with rays; the rooms were littered with cardboard cases, papers, and

circulars, useless no doubt. The floor of the lobby was as worn, as damp and gritty as the floor of a lodging-house parlor. Through a door on which the word *Counting-house* was inscribed, the visitor entered a second room, where everything was in keeping with the sinister waggery displayed in the first. In one corner stood a large cage of oak with a grill of copper-wire, and a cashier's sliding window. An enormous iron letter-box had doubtless been abandoned to the rats for a playground. The open door of this cage gave a view of yet another of these whimsical offices, and of a shabby and worm-eaten green chair, a mass of horsehair escaping through a hole underneath this piece of furniture in countless corkscrew curls that called its owner's wig to mind. Evidently this room had been the drawing-room of the house before it had been converted into offices, but the only attempt at ornamental furniture was a round table covered with a green cloth, and some old chairs covered with black leather and adorned with gilt nail-heads which stood about it. The chimney-piece had some pretensions to elegance, the hearthstone was unblackened, and there were no visible signs that a fire had been lighted there. The pier-glass above it, tarnished with fly-spots, had a mean look, so had a mahogany clock-case bought at the sale of some departed notary's office furniture, a dreary object which enhanced the depressing effect of the pair of empty candle-sticks and the all-pervading sticky grime. The dinginess of the paper on the walls, drab with a rose-colored border, spoke plainly of the habitual presence of smokers and absence of ventilation. The whole stale-looking room resembled nothing so much as a newspaper editor's office. Birotteau, afraid of intruding on the banker's privacy, gave three sharp taps on the door opposite the one by which he had entered.

"Come in!" cried Claparon, and the sound of his voice evidently came from a room beyond. The perfumer could hear a good fire crackling on the hearth, but the banker was not there. This apartment did duty, as a matter of fact, for a private office. François Keller's elegantly furnished

sanctum differed from the grotesque neglect of this sham capitalist's surroundings as widely as Versailles differs from the wigwam of a Huron chief; and Birotteau, who had beheld the glories of the banking world, was about to be introduced to its blackguardism.

In a sort of oblong den, contrived behind the private office, where the whole of the furniture, scarcely elegant in its prime, had been battered, broken, covered with grease, slit to rags, soiled and spoiled by the slovenly habits of the occupier, reclined Claparon, who, at sight of Birotteau, flung on a filthy dressing-gown, laid down his pipe, and drew the bed-curtains with a haste that seemed suspicious even to the innocent perfumer.

"Take a seat, sir," said du Tillet's banker puppet.

Claparon without his wig, his head tied up in a bandana handkerchief all awry, was to Birotteau's thinking the more repulsive in that his loose dressing-gown gave glimpses of a nondescript knitted woolen garment, once white, but now a dingy brown, from indefinitely prolonged wear.

"Will you breakfast with me?" asked Claparon, bethinking himself of the ball, and prompted partly by a wish to turn the tables on his host, partly by anxiety to put Birotteau off the scent. And, in point of fact, a round table hastily cleared of papers, was suspiciously suggestive; for it displayed a pâté, oysters, white wine, and a dish of vulgar kidneys, *sautés au vin de Champagne*, cooling in their gravy, while an omelette with truffles was browning before the sea-coal fire. The table was set for two persons; two table-napkins, soiled at supper on the previous evening, would have enlightened the purest innocence. Claparon, in the character of a man who has a belief in his own adroitness, insisted in spite of Birotteau's refusals.

"I should by rights have had somebody to breakfast, but that somebody has not kept the appointment," cried the cunning commercial traveler, speaking loud, so that the words might reach the ears of an auditor hiding under the blankets.

"I have come on business pure and simple, sir," said Birotteau, "and I shall not detain you long."

"I am overwhelmed with business," returned Claparon, pointing to a cylinder desk and to the tables, which were heaped up with papers, "not a poor little minute may I have to myself. I never see people except on Saturdays; but for you, my dear sir, I am always at home. I have no time left nowadays for love-affairs or lounging about; I am losing the business instinct, which takes intervals of carefully-timed idleness, if it is to keep its freshness. Nobody sees me busy doing nothing in the boulevards. Pshaw! business bores me. I don't care to hear any more about business at present; I have money enough, and I shall never have pleasure enough. My word, I have a mind to turn tourist and see Italy. Ah! beloved Italy! fair even amid her adversity, adorable land, where, doubtless, I shall find some magnificent, indolent Italian beauty; I have always admired Italian women! Have you ever had an Italian mistress? No? Oh, well, come to Italy with me. We will see Venice, the city of the Doges, fallen, more's the pity, into the hands of those philistines the Austrians, who know nothing of art. Pooh! let us leave business, and canals, and loans, and governments in peace. I am a prince when my pockets are well lined. Let us travel, by Jove!"

"Just one word, sir, and I will go," said Birotteau. "You passed my bills on to M. Bidault."

"Gigonnet, you mean; nice little fellow, Gigonnet; a man as easy-going as a—as a slip-knot."

"Yes," said César. "I should be glad—and in this matter I am relying on your integrity and honor—(Claparon bowed) —I should be glad if I could renew——"

"Impossible," said the banker roundly—"impossible. I am not the only man in the affair. We are all in council, 'tis a regular Chamber; but that we are all on good terms among ourselves, like rashers in a pan. Oh, we deliberate, that we do! The building land by the Madeleine is nothing: we are doing other things elsewhere. Eh! my good sir, if we were not busy in the Champs-Élysées, near the new Exchange which has just been finished, in the Quartier Saint-

Lazare and about the Tivoli, we should not be *vinanciers*, as old Nucingen says. So what is the Madeleine? A little speck of a business. Prrr! we do not dabble, my good sir," he said, tapping Birotteau's chest, and giving him a hug. "There, come and have your breakfast, and we will have a talk," Claparon continued, by way of softening his refusal.

"By all means," said Birotteau.—"So much the worse for the other," thought he. He would wait till the wine went to Claparon's head, and find out then who his partners really were in this affair, which began to have a very shady look.

"That is right!—Victoire!" shouted the banker, and at the call appeared a genuine Leonarda, tricked out like a fish-wife.

"Tell the clerks that I cannot see anybody, not even Nucingen, Keller, Gigonnet, and the rest of them!"

"There is no one here but M. Lempereur."

"He can receive the fashionables," said Claparon, "and the small fry need not go beyond the public office. They can be told that I am meditating how to get a pull—at a bottle of champagne."

To make an old commercial traveler tipsy is to achieve the impossible. César had mistaken his boon companion's symptoms, and thought his boisterous vulgarity was due to intoxication, when he tried to shrive him.

"There is that rascal Roguin still in it with you," said Birotteau: "ought you not to write and tell him to help out a friend whom he has left in the lurch, a friend with whom he dined every Sunday, and whom he has known for twenty years?"

"Roguin? A fool; we have his share. Don't be downhearted, my good friend, it will be all right. Pay on the 15th, and that done, we shall see! I say, 'we shall see'—(a glass of wine!)—but the capital is no concern of mine whatever. Oh! if you should not pay at all, *I* should not give you black looks; my share in the affair is limited to a percentage on the purchase-money, and something down on the completion of the contract, in consideration of which I brought round the

vendors. . . . Do you understand? Your associates are good men, so I am not afraid, my dear sir. Business is so divided up nowadays. Every business requires the co-operation of so many specialists! Do you join the rest of us? Then do not dabble in combs and pomade pots—a paltry way of doing business; fleece the public, and go in for the speculation."

"A speculation?" asked the perfumer: "what sort of business is it?"

"It is commerce in the abstract," replied Claparon, "an affair which will only come to light in ten years' time at the bidding of the great Nucingen, the Napoleon of finance, a scheme by which a man embraces sum-totals, and skims the cream of profits yet to be made; a gigantic conception, a method of marking expectations like timber for annual felling; it is a new cabal, in short. There are but ten or twelve of us as yet, long-headed men, all initiated into the cabalistic secrets of these magnificent combinations."

César opened his eyes and ears, trying to comprehend these mixed metaphors.

"Listen to me," Claparon continued, after a pause; "such strokes as these need capable men. Now, there is the man who has ideas, but has not a penny, like all men with ideas. That sort of man spends and is spent, and cares for nothing. Imagine a pig roaming about a wood for truffles, and a knowing fellow on his tracks; that is the man with the money, who waits till he hears a grunt over a find. When the man with the ideas has hit upon a good notion, the man with the money taps him on the shoulder with a 'What is this? You are putting yourself in the furnace-mouth, my good friend; your back is not strong enough to carry this; here are a thousand francs for you, and let *me* put this affair in working order.' Good! Then the banker summons the manufacturers—'Set to work, my friends! Out with your prospectuses! Blarney to the death!' Out come the hunting-horns, and they pipe up with 'A hundred thousand francs for five sous!'—or five sous for a hundred thousand francs,

gold-mines, coal-mines; all the flourishes and alarums of commerce, in short. Art and science are paid to give their opinion, the affair is paraded about, the public rushes into it, and receives paper for its money, and our takings are in our hands. The pig is safe in his sty with his potatoes, and the rest of them are wallowing in bills of exchange. That is how it is done, my dear sir. Go in for speculation. What do you want to be? A pig or a gull, a clown or a millionaire? Think it over. I have summed up the modern theory of loans for you. Come to see me; you will find a good fellow, always jolly. French joviality, at once grave and gay, does no harm in business, quite the contrary! Men who can drink are made to understand each other. Come! another glass of champagne? It is choice wine, eh? It was sent me by a man at Épernay, for whom I have sold a good deal of it, and at good prices too (I used to be in the wine trade). He shows his gratitude, and remembers me in my prosperity. A rare trait."

Birotteau, bewildered by this flippancy and careless tone in a man whom everybody credited with such astonishing profundity and breadth, did not dare to question him any further. But in spite of the confusion and excitement induced by unwonted potations of champagne, a name let fall by du Tillet came up in his mind, and he asked for the address of a bill-discounter named Gobseck.

"Is that what you are after, my dear sir?" asked Claparon. "Gobseck is a bill-discounter in the same sense that the hangman is a doctor. The first thing that he says to you is 'Fifty per cent.' He belongs to the school of Harpagon; he will supply you with canary birds, and stuffed boa-constrictors, with furs in summer and nankin in winter. And whose bills are you going to offer him? He will want you to deposit your wife, your daughter, your umbrella, and everything that is yours, down to your hat-box, your clogs (do you wear hinged clogs?), poker and tongs, and the firewood in your cellar, before he will take your bills with your bare name

to them! . . . Gobseck! Gobseck! In the name of misfortune, who sent you to the guillotine of commerce?"

"M. du Tillet."

"Oh! the rogue; just like him. We used to be friends once upon a time; and if the quarrel has gone so far that we do not speak to each other now, I have good reason for disliking him, believe me! He let me see the bottom of his soul of mud, and he made me uncomfortable at that fine ball you gave. I cannot bear him, with the coxcomb airs he gives himself, because he has the good graces of a *notaresse!* I could have marquises myself if I had a mind; he will never have my esteem, I know. Ah! my esteem is a princess who will never take up too much room on his pillow. I say though, old man, you are a funny one to give us a ball, and then come and ask us to renew two months afterwards! You are likely to go far. Let us go into speculation together. You have a character; it would be useful to me. Oh! du Tillet was born to understand Gobseck. Du Tillet will come to a bad end in the Place de Grève. If, as they say, he is one of Gobseck's lambs, he will soon come to the length of his tether. Gobseck squats in a corner of his web like an old spider who has seen the world. Sooner or later, *zut!* and the money-lender sucks in his man like a glass of wine. So much the better! Du Tillet played me a trick—oh! a scurvy trick!"

After an hour and a half spent in listening to meaningless prate, Birotteau determined to go, for the commercial traveler was preparing to relate the adventure of a representative of the people at Marseilles, who had fallen in love with an actress who played the part of *La Belle Arsène.* The Royalist pit hissed the lady.

"Up he gets," said Claparon, "and stands bolt upright in his box. *'Arté qui l'a siblée?'* says he; *'eu! . . . Si c'est oune femme, je l'amprise; si c'est oune homme, nous se verrons; si c'est ni l'un ni l'autte, que le troun di Diou le cure!'* . . . How do you think the adventure ended?"

"Good-day, sir," said Birotteau.

"You will have to come and see me," said Claparon at this.

"Cayron's first bill has come back protested, and I am the indorser; I have reimbursed the money, and I shall send it on to you, for business is business."

Birotteau felt this cool affectation of a readiness to oblige, as he had already felt Keller's hardness and Nucingen's Teutonic banter, in his very heart. The man's familiarity, his grotesque confidences made in the generous glow of champagne, had been like a blight to the perfumer; he felt as if he were leaving some evil haunt in the world financial.

He walked downstairs; he found himself in the streets and went, not knowing whither he went. He followed the boulevard till he reached the Rue Saint-Denis, then he bethought himself of Molineux, and turned to go towards the Cour Batave. He mounted the same dirty tortuous staircase which he had ascended but lately in the pride of his glory. He remembered Molineux's peevish meanness, and winced at the thought of asking a favor of him. As on the occasion of his previous visit, he found the owner of house property by the fireside, but this time he had eaten his breakfast. Birotteau formulated his demand.

"Renew a bill for twelve hundred francs?" said Molineux, with an incredulous smile. "You do not mean it, sir. If you have not twelve hundred francs on the 15th to meet my bill, will you please to send me back my receipt for rent that has not been paid? Ah! I should be angry; I do not use the slightest ceremony in money matters; my rents are my income. If I acted otherwise, how should I pay my way? A man in business will not disapprove of that wholesome rule. Money knows nobody; money has no ears; money has no heart. It is a cold winter, and here is firewood dearer again. If you do not pay on the 15th, you will receive a little summons by noon on the 16th. Pshaw! old Mitral, who serves your processes, acts for me too; he will send you your summons in an envelope, with due regard for your high position."

"A writ has never been served on me, sir," said Birotteau.

"Everything must have a beginning," retorted Molineux.

The perfumer was taken aback by the little old man's frank ferocity; the knell of credit rang in his ears; and every fresh stroke awoke memories of his own sayings as to bankruptcies, prompted by his remorseless jurisprudence. Those opinions of his seemed to be traced in letters of fire on the soft substance of his brain.

"By the by," Molineux was saying, "you forget to write 'For value received in rent' across your bills; that might give me a preferential claim."

"My position forbids me to do anything to the prejudice of my creditors," said Birotteau, dazed by that glimpse into the gulf before him.

"Good, sir, very good. I thought that I had nothing left to learn in my dealings with messieurs my tenants. You have taught me never to take bills in payment. Oh! I will take the thing into Court, for your answer as good as tells me that you will not meet your engagements. The case touches every landlord in Paris."

Birotteau went out, sick of life. Feeble and tender natures lose heart at the first rebuff, just as a first success puts courage into them. César's only hope now lay in little Popinot's devotion; his thoughts naturally turned to him as he passed the Marché des Innocents.

"Poor boy! who would have told me this when I started him six weeks ago at the Tuileries."

It was nearly four o'clock, the time when the magistrates leave the Palais. As it fell out, the elder Popinot had gone to see his nephew. The examining magistrate, who in moral questions had a kind of second-sight which laid bare the secret motives of others, who discerned the underlying significance of the most commonplace actions of daily life, the germs of crime, the roots of a misdemeanor, was watching Birotteau, though Birotteau did not suspect it. Birotteau seemed to be put out by finding the uncle with the nephew; the perfumer's manner was constrained he was preoccupied and thoughtful. Little Popinot, busy as usual with

his pen behind his ear, always fell flat, figuratively speaking, before Césarine's father. César's meaningless remarks to his partner, to the judge's thinking, were merely screens, some important demand was about to be made. Instead of leaving the shop, therefore, the shrewd man of law stayed with his nephew, for he thought that César would try to get rid of him by making a move himself. And so it was. When Birotteau had gone, the judge followed, but he noticed César lounging along the Rue des Cinq-Diamants in the direction of the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher. This infinitely small matter bred suspicion in the mind of Popinot the elder; he mistrusted César's intentions, went along the Rue des Lombards, watched the perfumer go back to Anselme's shop, and promptly repaired thither.

"My dear Popinot," César had begun, "I have come to ask you to do me a service."

"What is there to be done?" asked Popinot, with generous eagerness.

"Ah! you give me life!" cried the good man, rejoicing in this warmth from the heart that sent a glow through him after those twenty-five days of glacial cold. "It is this, to allow me to draw a bill on you on account of my share of the profits; we will settle between ourselves."

Popinot looked steadily at César; César lowered his eyes. Just at that moment the magistrate reappeared.

"My boy—Oh! I beg your pardon, M. Birotteau—my boy, I forgot to say . . ." and with the imperative gesture learned in the exercise of his profession, the elder Popinot drew his nephew out into the street, and marched him, bareheaded and in shirt-sleeves as he was, in the direction of the Rue des Lombards.

"Your old master will very likely find himself in such straits, that he may be forced to file his schedule, nephew. Before a man comes to that, a man who, may be, has a record of forty years of upright dealing, nay the very best of men, in his anxiety to save his honor, will behave like the most frantic gambler. Men in that predicament will do anything.

They will sell their wives and traffic in their daughters; they will bring their best friends into the scrape, and pawn property which is not theirs; they will go to the gaming-table, turn actors—nay, liars; they will shed tears at need. In short, I have known them do the most extraordinary things. You yourself know how good-natured Roguin was, a man who looked as though butter would not melt in his mouth. I do not press these conclusions home in M. Birotteau's case; I believe that he is honest; but if he should ask you to do anything at all irregular, no matter what it is; if he should want you, for instance, to accept accommodation bills, and so start you in a system which, to my way of thinking, is the beginning of all sorts of rascality (for it is counterfeit paper-money), promise me that you will sign nothing without first consulting me. You must remember that if you love his daughter, even for your own sake and hers, you must not spoil your future. If M. Birotteau must come to grief, what is the use of going with him? What is it but cutting yourselves off from all chance of escape through your business, which will be his refuge?"

"Thank you, uncle; a word to the wise is sufficient," said Anselme; his uncle's words explained that heartrending cry from his master.

The merchant who dealt in druggists' oils and sundries looked thoughtful as he entered his dark shop. Birotteau saw the change.

"Will you honor me by coming up to my room? we can talk more at our ease there than here. The assistants, busy as they are, might overhear us."

Birotteau followed Popinot, a victim to such cruel suspense as the condemned man knows, while he waits for a reprieve or the rejection of his appeal.

"My dear benefactor," Anselme began, "you do not doubt my devotion; it is blind. Permit me to ask but one thing. Will this sum of money save you once and for all? Or will it merely put off some catastrophe? in which case, what is the use of carrying me with you? You want bills at ninety

days. Very well, but I am sure that I myself shall not be able to meet them in three months' time."

Birotteau, white and grave, rose to his feet, and looked into Popinot's face.

Popinot, in alarm, cried, "I will do it if you wish it."

"Ungrateful boy!" cried the perfumer, gathering all his strength to hurl at Anselme the words which should brand him as infamous.

Birotteau walked to the door and went. Popinot, recovering from the sensation which the terrible words had produced in him, darted downstairs and rushed into the street, but saw no sign of the perfumer. The dreadful words of doom rang in the ears of Césarine's lover, poor César's face of anguish was always before his eyes; he lived, indeed, like Hamlet, haunted by a ghastly spectre.

Birotteau staggered along the streets like a drunken man. He found himself at last on the Quai, and followed its course to Sèvres, where he spent the night in an inn, stupefied with sorrow; and his frightened wife dared not make any inquiries for him. Under such circumstances, it is fatal to give the alarm rashly. Constance wisely immolated her anxiety to her husband's business reputation; she sat up all night for him, mingling prayers with her fears. Was César dead? Had he left Paris in the pursuit of some last hope? When morning came, she behaved as [illegible] she knew the cause of his absence; but when at five o'clock César had not returned, she sent word to her uncle and begged him to go to the Morgue. All through that day the brave woman sat at her desk, her daughter doing her embroidery by her side, and, neither sad nor smiling, both confronted the public with quiet faces.

When Pillerault came, he brought César with him; he had met his niece's husband after 'Change in the Palais Royal, hesitating to enter a gaming-house. That day was the 14th.

César could eat nothing at dinner. His stomach, too violently contracted, rejected food; it was a miserable meal; but it was not so bad as the evening that came after it. For the hundredth time, the merchant experienced one of the

deous alternations of despair and hope which wear out weak tures, when the soul passes through the whole scale of sensations, from the highest pitch of joy to the lowest depths of despair. Derville, the consulting barrister, rushed into the splendid drawing-room. Mme. César had done everything in her power to keep her poor husband there; he had wanted to sleep in the attic, "so as not to see the monuments of my folly," he said.

"We have gained the day," cried Derville.

At these words the lines in César's face were smoothed out, but his joy alarmed Pillerault and Derville. The two frightened women went away to cry in Césarine's room.

"Now I can sorrow on the property!" exclaimed the perfumer.

"It would not be wise to do so," said Derville; "they have given notice of appeal, the Court-Royal may reverse the decision, but we shall know in a month's time."

"A month!"

César sank into a lethargy, from which no one attempted to rouse him. This species of intermittent catalepsy, during which the body lives and suffers while the action of the mind is suspended, this fortuitous respite from mental anguish, was regarded as a godsend by Constance, Césarine, Pillerault, and Derville—and they were right. In this way Birotteau was able to recover from the wear and tear of the night's emotions. He lay in a low chair by the fireside; over against him sat his wife, who watched him closely, with a sweet smile on her lips—one of those smiles which prove that women are nearer to the angels than men, in that they can blend infinite tenderness with the most sincere compassion, a secret known only to the angels whose presence is revealed to us in the dreams providentially scattered at long intervals in the course of human life. Césarine, sitting on a footstool at her mother's feet, now and again bent her head over her father's hands and brushed them lightly with her hair, as if by this caress she would fain communicate through the sense of touch the thoughts which at such a time are importunate when rendered by articulate speech.

Pillerault, that philosopher prepared for every emergency, sat in his armchair, like the statue of the Chancellor of the Hôpital in the peristyle of the Chamber of Deputies, wearing the same look of intelligence which is stamped on the features of an Egyptian sphinx, and talked in a low voice with Derville. Constance had recommended that the lawyer, whose discretion was above suspicion, should be consulted. With the schedule already drafted in her mind, she laid the situation before Derville; and after an hour's consultation or thereabouts, held in the presence of the dozing performer, Derville looked at Pillerault and shook his head.

"Madame," said he, with the pitiless coolness of a man of business, "you must file your petition. Suppose that by some means or other you should contrive to meet your bills to-morrow, you must eventually pay at least three thousand francs before you can borrow on the whole of your landed property. To your liabilities, amounting to five hundred and [illegible]ty t[illegible]usand francs, you oppose assets consisting of a very valua[illegible] and very promising piece of property which cannot b[illegible]re[illegible]d—you must give up in a given time, and it is bet-[illegible] opinion, to jump from the window than to roll [illegible]tairs."

[illegible] of that opinion, too, my child," said Pillerault.

M[illegible] [illegible]d Pillerault both went to the door with Der-[illegible]e.

"F[illegible] said C[illegible]arine, rising softly to put a kiss on [illegible]ésar [illegible]—"Then could Anselme do nothing?" she [illegible]ked [illegible]nother and uncle came in again.

"T[illegible]al boy!" cried César. The name had [illegible]uch[illegible] sensitive spot in his memory, like the string of a [illegible]nant to the stroke of the hammer.

Little [illegible]pinot, meanwhile, since those words had been hurled at him like an anathema, had not had a moment's peace or a wink of sleep. The hapless youth called down maledictions on his uncle, and went in search of him. To induce experience and legal acumen to capitulate, young Popinot poured forth all a lover's eloquence, hoping to work

on the feelings of a judge, but his words slid over the man of law like water over oilcloth.

"Commercial usage," pleaded Anselme, "permits a sleeping partner to draw to a certain extent upon his co-associate on account of profits; and in our partnership we ought to put it in practice. After looking into my business all round, I feel sure that I am good to pay forty thousand francs in three months' time. M. César's honesty permits me to feel confident that he will use the forty thousand francs to meet his bills. So, if he fails, the creditors will have no reason to complain of this action on our part. And besides, uncle, I would rather lose forty thousand francs than give up Césarine. At this moment, while I am speaking, she will have heard of my refusal, and I shall be lowered in her eyes. I said that I would give my life for my benefactor! I am in the case of the young sailor who must go to the bottom with his captain, or the soldier who is bound to perish with his general."

"A good heart and a bad man of business; you will not be lowered in *my* eyes," said the judge, grasping his nephew's hand. "I have thought a good deal about this," he continued; "I know that you love Césarine to distraction; I think that you can obey the laws of your heart without breaking the laws of commerce."

"Oh! uncle, if you have found out a way, you will save my honor."

"Lend Birotteau fifty thousand francs on his proprietary interest in your Oil; it has become, as it were, a piece of property; I will draw up the document for you."

Anselme embraced his uncle, went home, made out bills for fifty thousand francs, and ran all the way from the Rue des Cinq-Diamants to the Place Vendôme; so that at the very moment when Césarine, her mother, and Pillerault were gazing at the perfumer, amazed by the sepulchral tone in which the words "Ungrateful boy!" were uttered in answer to the girl's question, the drawing-room door opened, and Popinot appeared.

"My dearly beloved master," he said, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, "here is the thing for which you asked me."

He held out the bills.

"Yes. I have thought carefully over my position; I shall meet them, never fear! Save your honor!"

"I was quite sure of him," cried Césarine, grasping Popinot's hand convulsively.

Mme. César embraced Popinot. The perfumer rose out of his chair, like the righteous at the sound of the last trump; he too was issuing from a tomb. Then with frenzied eagerness he clutched the fifty stamped papers.

"One moment!" cried the stern Uncle Pillerault, snatching up Popinot's bills. "One moment!"

The four persons composing this family group—César and his wife, Césarine and Popinot—bewildered by their uncle's interposition, and by the tone in which he spoke, looked on in terror while he tore the bills to pieces and flung them into the fire, where they blazed up before any one of them could stop him.

"Uncle!"

"Uncle!"

"Uncle!"

"Sir!"

There were four voices, and four hearts in one, a formidable unanimity. Uncle Pillerault put an arm round little Popinot, held him tightly to his heart, and put a kiss on his forehead.

"You deserve to be adored by any one who has a heart at all," said he. "If you loved my daughter, and she had a million, and you had nothing but *that*" (he pointed to the blackened scraps of paper), "you should marry her in a fortnight if she loved you. Your master," indicating César, "is mad.—Now, nephew," Pillerault began gravely, addressing the perfumer, "no more illusions! Business must be carried on with hard coin, and not with sentiments. This is sublime, but it is useless. I have been on 'Change for a cou-

ple of hours. No one will give you credit for two farthings; everybody is talking about your disaster; everybody knows that you could not get renewals, that you went to more than one banker, and that they would have nothing to say to you, and all your other follies; it is known that you climbed six pair of stairs to ask the landlord who chatters like a jackdaw to renew a bill for twelve hundred francs; everybody says that you gave a ball to hide your embarrassment. . . . They will say directly that you had no money deposited with Roguin. Roguin is a blind, according to your enemies. One of my friends, commissioned to report everything, has brought confirmation of my suspicions. Every one expects that you will try to put Popinot's bills on the market; in fact, you set him up on purpose to tide you over your difficulties. In short, all the gossip and slander usually set in motion by any man who tries to mount a step in the social scale is going the round of business circles at this moment. You would spend a week in hawking Popinot's bills from place to place, you would meet with humiliating refusals, and nobody would have anything to do with them. There is nothing to show how many of them you are issuing, and people look to see you sacrificing this poor boy to save yourself. You would ruin Popinot's credit in pure waste. Do you know how much the most sanguine bill-discounter would give you for your fifty thousand francs? Twenty thousand; *twenty thousand,* do you understand? There are times in business when you must contrive to hold out for three days without food, as if you had the indigestion, and the fourth brings admission to the pantry of credit. You cannot hold out for the three days, and therein lies the whole position. Take heart, my poor nephew, you must file your schedule. Here is Popinot, and here am I; as soon as your assistants have gone to bed we will set to work to spare you the misery of it."

"Uncle! . . ." cried the perfumer, clasping his hands.

"César, do you really mean to arrive at a fraudulent bankruptcy with assets *nil?* Your interest in Popinot's business saves your honor."

This last fatal light thrown on his position made it clear to César; he saw the full extent of the hideous truth; he sank down into his low chair, and then on to his knees; his mind wandered, he became a child again. His wife thought the shock had killed him, and knelt to raise him, but she clung close to him when she saw him clasp his hands and raise his eyes; and in spite of the presence of his uncle, his daughter, and Popinot, he began with remorseful resignation to repeat the sublime prayer of the Church on earth:

"Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. *Give us this day our daily bread.* And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

Tears filled Pillerault's stoical eyes, and Césarine stood, white and rigid as marble, with her tear-stained face hidden on Anselme's shoulder Then the old merchant took the young man's arm, "Let us go downstairs," he said.

At half-past eleven they left César in the care of his wife and daughter. Just at that moment Célestin, who had looked after the business during this storm, came upstairs and opened the drawing-room door. Césarine heard his footsteps, and hurried forward to place herself so as to screen the prostrate master of the house.

"Among this evening's letters," he said, "there was one from Tours, the direction was not clear, it has been delayed. I thought it might be from the master's brother, so I did not open it."

"Father," cried Césarine, "there is a letter from uncle at Tours."

"Ah! I am saved!" exclaimed César. "My brother! my brother!" and he kissed the letter, which ran thus:

François Birotteau to César Birotteau.

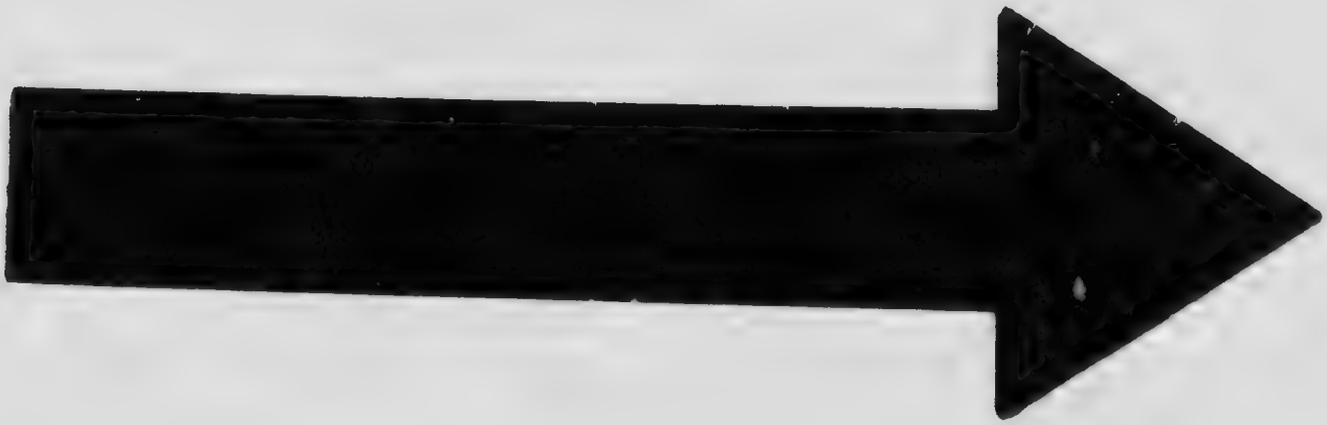
TOURS, 17th.

"MY BELOVED BROTHER.—Your letter has given me the keenest distress; and so when I had read it, I offered up to God on your behalf the holy sacrifice of the mass, praying Him, by the blood shed for us by our Divine Redeemer, to look mercifully upon you in your affliction. And now that I have put up my prayer *pro meo fratre Cæsare*, my eyes are filled with tears to think that by misfortune I am separated from you at a time when you must need the support of a brother's affection. But then I bethought me that the worthy and venerated M. Pillerault will doubtless fill my place. My dear César, in the midst of your troubles, do not forget that this life of ours is a life of trial and a transition state; that one day we shall be rewarded if we have suffered for the holy name of God, for His holy Church, for putting in practice the doctrines of the Gospel, or for leading a virtuous life; if it were not so, the things of this present world would be unintelligible. I repeat these words, though I know how good and pious you are, because it may happen to those who, like you, are tossed by the tempests of this world, and launched upon the perilous seas of human concerns, to be led to blaspheme in their distresses, distracted as they are by pain. Do not curse the men who will wound you, nor God, who mingles bitterness with your life at His will. Look not on the earth, but rather keep your eyes lifted to Heaven; thence comes comfort for the weak, the riches of the poor are there, and the fears of the rich . . ."

"Oh, Birotteau," interrupted his wife, "just miss that out, and see if he is sending us anything."

"We will often read it over," said her husband, drying his eyes. He opened the letter, and a draft on the Treasury fell out. "I was quite sure of him, poor brother," said Birotteau, picking up the draft.

". . . I went to see Mme. de Listomère," he continued, reading in a voice choked with tears, "and without giving a



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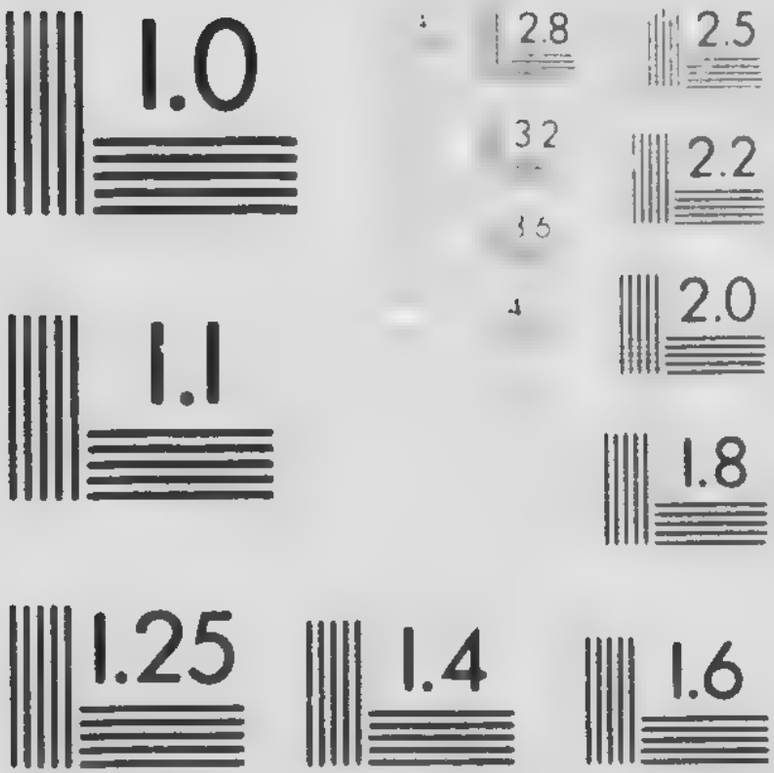

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reason for my request, I begged her to lend me all that she could spare, so as to swell the amount of my savings. Her generosity enables me to make up the sum of a thousand francs, which I send you in the form of a draft by the Receiver-General of Tours upon the Treasury."

"A handsome advance!" said Constance, looking at Césarine.

"By retrenching some superfluities in my way of living, I shall be able to repay Mme. de Listomère the money I have borrowed of her in three years' time; so do not trouble about it, my dear César. I am sending you all that I have in the world, with the wish that the sum may assist you to bring your difficulties to a happy termination; doubtless they are but momentary. I know your delicacy, and wish to anticipate your scruples. Do not dream of paying any interest on the amount, nor of returning it in the day of prosperity, which will dawn for you before long, if God deigns to grant the petitions which I make daily for you. After your last letter, received two years ago, I thought that you were rich, and that I might give my savings to the poor; but now all that I have belongs to you. When you have weathered this passing squall, keep the money for my niece Césarine, so that when she is established in life she may spend it on some trifle which will remind her of an old uncle, whose hands are always raised to Heaven to implore God's blessing upon her, and for all those who shall be dear to her. Bear in mind, in fact, dear César, that I am a poor priest, living by the grace of God, as the wild-birds live in the fields, walking quietly in my own path, striving to keep the commandments of our divine Saviour, and consequently needing but little. So do not have the least hesitation in your difficult position, and think of me as one who loves you tenderly. Our excellent Abbé Chapeloud (to whom I have not said a word about your strait) knows that I am writing to you, and wishes me to send the most kindly messages to all your family, with

shes for your continued prosperity. May God vouchsafe preserve you and your wife and daughter in good health; I pray for patience to you all, and courage in the day of ersity.

"FRANÇOIS BIROTTEAU.

Priest of the Cathedral Church of Tours, and Vicar of the Parish Church of Saint-Gatien."

"A thousand francs!" cried Mme. Birotteau, in vehement er.

"Lock it up," César said gravely; "it is all he has. Be- es, it belongs to our Césarine, and should enable us to live hout asking anything of our creditors."

"And then they will believe that you have taken away large ms."

"I shall show them his letter."

"They will say that it is a fraud."

"*Oh! mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*" cried César, appalled at this; "I have often thought that very thing of poor folk who, no bt, were just in my position."

Mother and daughter were both too anxious about César leave him, and they sewed on by his side. There was a p silence. At two o'clock in the morning the drawing- m door was softly opened, and Popinot beckoned to Mme. ar to come downstairs. At the sight of his niece, Uncle Lerault took off his spectacles.

"There is hope yet, my child," he said; "all is not over; but r husband could not stand the strain of the ups and downs this business, so Popinot and I will try to arrange it. Do leave the shop to-morrow, and take down the names of all holders of the bills; we have all the day till four o'clock. is my idea. There is nothing to fear from M. Ragon rom me. Suppose now that Roguin had paid over to the lors the hundred thousand francs you deposited with him n that case, you would no more have them than you have m to-day. You have to meet bills to the amount of a hun- d and forty thousand francs, payable to Claparon's order;

you must pay them anyhow, so it is not Roguin's bankruptcy which is ruining you. Now, to meet your liabilities, I see forty thousand francs to be borrowed sooner or later on your factory, and sixty thousand francs in Popinot's bills. So you may struggle through; for once through, you can raise money on that building-land by the Madeleine. If your principal creditor agrees to help you, I shall not consider my fortune; I will sell my *rentes;* I shall be without bread; Popinot will be between life and death; and, as for you, you will be at the mercy of the smallest events. But the Oil will give a good return, no doubt. Popinot and I have been consulting together; we will support you in this struggle. Oh, I will eat my dry bread gaily, if success dawns on the horizon. But everything depends on Gigonnet and on Claparon and his associates. We are going to see Gigonnet between seven and eight, Popinot and I, and then we shall know what to make of their intentions."

Constance, carried away by her feelings, put her arms about her uncle, and could not speak for tears and sobs. Neither Popinot nor Pillerault could know that Bidault, *alias* Gigonnet, and Claparon were but two of du Tillet's doubles, and that du Tillet had set his heart upon reading this terrible paragraph in the *Gazette:*

"Decree of the Tribunal of Commerce. M. César Birotteau, wholesale perfumer, of 397 Rue Saint-Honoré, Paris, declared a bankrupt, date provisionally fixed, 16th of January 1819. Registrar: M. Gobenheim-Keller. Agent: M. Molineux."

Anselme and Pillerault studied César's affairs till daylight came, and at eight o'clock that morning the two heroic comrades, the old veteran and the subaltern of yesterday, neither of whom was destined to experience on his own account the dreadful agony of mind endured by those who go up and down the stairs of Bidault, otherwise Gigonnet, betook themselves without a word to the Rue Grenétat. It was a

painful time for both of them. More than once Pillerault passed his hand over his forehead.

In the Rue Grenétat multifarious small trades are carried on in every overcrowded house. Every building has a repulsive aspect. The hideousness of these houses has a distinct quality of its own, in which the mean squalor of a poor industrial neighborhood predominates.

Old Gigonnet inhabited the third floor in one of these houses. All the windows, with their dirty square panes of glass, were secured to the frames by pivots, and tilted to admit the air; you walked straight up the staircase from the street, and the porter lived in the box on the mezzanine floor lighted from the staircase. Every one in the house, except Gigonnet, plied some handicraft; workmen came and went all day long. Every step on the stairs, where filth was allowed to accumulate, was plastered over with a coating of mud, hard or soft, according to the state of the weather. Each landing on this fetid stair displayed the name of some craftsman painted in gilt letters on a sheet of iron, which was painted red and varnished, and some sample of the man's achievements in his trade. The doors, for the most part, stood ajar, affording glimpses of grotesque combinations of industry and domestic life; the sounds which issued thence, snatches of song, yells, whistlings, and uncouth growls recalled the noises heard at the Jardin des Plantes towards four o'clock. The smartest braces for the trade in the *article Paris* were being made in a loathsome den on the first floor; on the second, among heaps of the most unsavory litter, the manufacture of the daintiest cardboard boxes, displayed at the New Year in shop windows, was carried on. Gigonnet, who was worth eighteen hundred thousand francs, lived and died on the third floor in this house. Nothing would induce him to leave it, although his niece, Mme. Saillard, offered him rooms in a mansion in the Place Royale.

"Courage!" said Pillerault, as he jerked the cord of the door bell-pull that hung by Gigonnet's neat gray-painted door.

Gigonnet himself opened it, and the perfumer's two champions in the lists of bankruptcy went through a formal, chilly-looking room, with curtainless windows, and entered a second, where all three seated themselves.

The bill-discounter took up his position before a grate full of ashes, in which the wood maintained a stubborn resistance to the flames. The sight of his green cardboard cases, and the monastic austerity of the office, windy as a cave, sent a cold chill through Popinot. His dazed eyes wandered over the pattern of the cheap wall-paper—tricolor flowers on a bluish background—which had been hung some five-and-twenty years back; and turned from that depressing sight to the ornaments on the chimney-piece, a lyre-shaped clock and oval vases, blue Sèvres ware, handsomely mounted in gilt copper. This bit of flotsam, recovered by Gigonnet from the wreck of Versailles, when the palace was sacked by the populace, came from a queen's boudoir, but the magnificent-looking ornaments were flanked by a couple of wrought-iron candlesticks of the commonest description, a harsh contrast which continually reminded the beholder of the manner in which their owner had come by those royal splendors.

"I know that you cannot come on your own account," said Gigonnet, "but for the great Birotteau. Well, what is it, my friends?"

"I know that you have nothing to learn, so we will be brief," said Pillerault. "Have you his bills payable to Claparon?"

"Yes."

"Will you exchange the first fifty thousand francs that will fall due for bills accepted by M. Popinot here, less the discount, of course?"

Gigonnet lifted the terrible green cap, which seemed to have been born with him, and displayed a bald butter-colored pate, then with a Voltairean grin:

"You want to pay me in oil for hair," he remarked, "and what should I do with it?"

"When you joke, it is time for us to take ourselves off," said Pillerault

"You speak like the sensible man that you are," said Gigonnet, with a flattering smile.

"Very well, and how if I back M. Popinot's bills?" asked Pillerault, making a final effort.

"You are as good as gold ingots, M. Pillerault; but I have no use for gold ingots, all that I want is current coin."

Pillerault and Popinot took their leave and went. Even at the foot of the staircase Popinot's knees still shook under him.

"Is he a man?" he asked of Pillerault.

"People say so," answered the older man. "Keep this little interview always in mind, Anselme! You have seen what money-lending is, stripped of its masquerade and palaver. Some unforeseen event turns the screw upon us, and we are the grapes, and bill-discounters the barrels. This speculation in building-land is a good piece of business no doubt; Gigonnet, or somebody behind him, has a mind to cut César's throat and to step into his shoes. That is all; there is no help for it now. And this is what comes of borrowing money; never resort to it."

It had been a dreadful morning for Mme. Birotteau. For the first time she had taken the addresses of those who came for money, and had sent away the Bank collector without paying him; yet the brave woman was glad to spare her husband these humiliations. Towards eleven o'clock she saw Pillerault and Anselme returning; she had been expecting them with ever-increasing anxiety, and now she read her doom in their faces. There was no help for it, the schedule must be filed.

"He will die of grief," said the poor wife.

"I could wish that he might," said Pillerault gravely; "but he is so devout, that as things stand his director the Abbé Loraux alone can save him."

Pillerault, Popinot, and Constance remained below, while one of the assistants went for the Abbé Loraux. The Abbé should prepare Birotteau for the schedule which Célestin was copying out fair for his master's signature. The assistants

were in despair; they loved their employer. At four o'clock the good priest came. Constance told him all the details of the calamity which had befallen them, and the Abbé went upstairs like a soldier mounting to the breach.

"I know why you have come," César exclaimed.

"My son," said the priest, "your sentiments of submission to the Divine will have long been known to me, now you are called upon to put them in practice. Keep your eyes fixed ever upon the Cross, contemplate the Cross without ceasing, and think of the cup of humiliation of which the Saviour of men was compelled to drink, think of the anguish of His Passion, and thus you may endure the mortifications sent to you by God——"

"My brother the Abbé has already prepared me," said César, holding out the letter, which he read over again, to his confessor.

"You have a good brother," said M. Loraux, "a virtuous and sweet-natured wife, and a loving daughter, two real friends in your uncle and dear Anselme, two indulgent creditors in the Ragons. All these kind hearts will pour balm into your wounds continually, and will help you to carry your cross. Promise me to bear yourself with a martyr's courage, and to take the blow without wincing."

The Abbé coughed, a signal to Pillerault in the next room.

"My submission is unlimited," said César calmly. "Disgrace has come upon me; I ought only to think of making reparation."

Césarine and the priest were both surprised by poor Birotteau's tone and look. And yet nothing was more natural. Every man bears a definitely known misfortune better than suspense and constant alternations of excessive joy at one moment, followed on the next by the last extremity of anguish.

"I have been dreaming for twenty-two years," he said, "and to-day I wake to find myself staff in hand again." César had once more become the Tourangeau peasant.

At these words Pillerault held his nephew tightly in his arms. César looked up and saw his wife and Célestin, the

latter with significant documents in his hands; then he glanced calmly round the group; all the eyes that met his were sad but friendly.

"One moment!" he said, and unfastening his Cross of the Legion of Honor, which he gave to the Abbé Loraux, "you will give that back to me when I can wear it without a blush. Célestin," he continued, turning to his assistant, "send in my resignation; I am no longer deputy-mayor. M. l'Abbé will dictate the letter to you, date it January 14th, and send Raguet with it to M. de la Billardière."

Célestin and the Abbé Loraux went downstairs. For nearly a quarter of an hour perfect silence prevailed in César's study. Such firmness took the family by surprise. Célestin and the Abbé came back again, and César signed the letter of resignation; but when Pillerault laid the schedule before him, poor Birotteau could not repress a dreadful nervous tremor.

"Oh, God! have mercy upon us!" he said, as he signed the terrible instrument and handed it to Célestin.

Then Anselme Popinot spoke, and a gleam of light crossed his clouded brow. "Monsieur and madame," he said, "will you grant me the honor of mademoiselle's hand?"

This speech brought tears into the eyes of all who heard it; César alone rose to his feet, took Anselme's hand, and said in a hollow voice, but with dry eyes, "My boy, you shall never marry a bankrupt's daughter."

Anselme looked Birotteau steadily in the face.

"Will you promise, sir, in the presence of your whole family, to consent to our marriage, if mademoiselle will take me for her husband, on the day when you shall have paid all your creditors in full?"

There was a moment's pause. Every one felt the influence of the emotion recorded in the perfumer's weary face.

"Yes," he said at last.

Anselme stretched out his hand to Césarine with an indescribable gesture; she gave him hers, and he kissed it.

"Do you also consent?" he asked her.

"Yes," she said.

"So I am really one of the family. I have a right to interest myself in your affairs," was his comment, with an enigmatical look.

Anselme hurried away lest he should betray a joy in too great contrast with his master's trouble. Anselme was not exactly delighted with the bankruptcy; but so absolute, so egoistical is love, that Césarine herself in her inmost heart felt a glow of happiness strangely at variance with her bitter distress of mind.

"While we are about it, let us strike every blow at once," said Pillerault, and in Constance's ear.

An involuntary gesture, a sign not of assent, but of sorrow, was Mme. Birotteau's answer.

"What do you mean to do, nephew?" said Pillerault, turning to Cesar.

"To continue the business."

"I am not of that opinion," said Pillerault. "Go into liquidation, let your assets go to your creditors in the shape of dividend, and go out of business altogether. I have often thought what I should do if I were placed in a similar position. (Oh! you must be prepared for everything! The merchant who does not contemplate possible insolvency is like a general who does not lay his account with a defeat; he is only half a merchant.) I myself should never have gone on again. What! Be compelled to blush before men whom I should have wronged, to endure their suspicious looks and unspoken reproaches? I can think of the guillotine—in one instant all is over; but to carry a head on your shoulders to have it cut off daily, is a kind of torture from which I should escape. Plenty of men begin again as though nothing had happened; so much the better for them!—they are braver than Claude-Joseph Pillerault. If you pay your way (and pay ready money you must), people will say that you managed to save something for yourself; and if you have not a half-penny, you will never recover. 'Tis good-evening to you. Surrender your assets, let them sell you up, and do something else."

"But what?" asked César.

"Eh! try for a place under the Government," said Pillerault; "you have influence, have you not? There are the Duc and Duchesse de Lenoncourt, Mme. de Mortsauf, M. de Vandenesse! Write to them, go to see them, they will find you some post in the Household, with a thousand crowns or so hanging to it; your wife will earn as much again; your daughter, perhaps, may do the same. The case is not desperate. You three among you will earn something like ten thousand francs a year. In ten years' time, you will be in a position to pay a hundred thousand francs, for you will have no expenses meanwhile; your womankind shall have fifteen hundred francs from me; and, as for you, we shall see."

It was Constance, and not César, who pondered these wise words, and Pillerault went on 'Change. At that time stockbrokers used to congregate in a provisional structure of planks and scaffolding, a large circular room, with an entrance in the Rue Feydeau. The perfumer's failure was already known, and had created a sensation in high commercial circles, for their prevailing politics were Constitutional at that time. Birotteau was a conspicuous personage, and envied by many. Merchants, on the other hand, who leaned towards Liberalism, regarded Birotteau's too celebrated ball as an audacious attempt to trade on their sentiments, for the Opposition were fain to monopolize patriotism. Royalists were allowed to love the King, but the love of their country was the exclusive privilege of the Left, the Left was for the people; and those in power had no right to rejoice thus viciously through the administration, in a national event which the Liberals meant to exploit for their own benefit. For which reasons the fall of a Ministerialist in favor at Court, of an incorrigible Royalist who had insulted Liberty by fighting against the glorious French Revolution on Vendémiaire 13th, set all tongues wagging on 'Change, and was received with applause.

Pillerault wanted to know what was being said, and to study public opinion. He went up to one of the most eager

groups: du Tillet, Gobenheim, Keller, Nucingen, old Guillaume and his son-in-law Joseph Lebas, Claparon, Gigonnet, Mongenod, Camusot, Gobseck, Adolphe Keller, Palma, Chiffreville, Matefat, Grindot, and Lourdois were discussing the news.

"Well, well, how careful one had need to be!" said Gobenheim, addressing du Tillet; "my brothers-in-law all ten opened an account with Birotteau, it was a near thing."

"I am let in for ten thousand francs myself," said du Tillet; "he came to me a fortnight ago, and I let him have the money on his bare signature. But he obliged me once, and I shall lose it without regret."

"Your nephew is like the rest," said Lourdois, addressing Pillerault. "Gave entertainments. I can imagine that a rogue might try to throw dust in your eyes to induce confidence; but how could a man who passed for the cream of honest folk descend to the stale mountebank's trickery that never fails to catch us?"

"Like leeches," commented Gobseck.

"Only trust a man if he lives in a den like Claparon," said Gigonnet.

"Vell," said the stout Baron Nucingen, for du Tillet's benefit, "you haf dried to blay me a nice drick, sending Pirôdôt to me. I do not know," he went on, turning to Gobenheim the manufacturer, "why he did not send roundt to me for vifty tousend vrancs; I should haf led him haf dem."

"Oh! not you, M. le Baron," said Joseph Lebas. "You must have known quite well that the Bank had refused his paper; you were on the Discount Committee which declined it. This poor man, for whom I still feel a very great respect, fails under singular circumstances——"

Pillerault grasped Joseph Lebas' hand.

"It is, in fact, impossible to explain how the thing has happened," said Mongenod, "except by the theory that there is some one behind Gigonnet, some banker whose intention it is to spoil the Madeleine speculation."

"The thing which has happened to him always happens to people who go out of their own line," said Claparon, interrupting Mongenod. "If he had brought out his Cephalic Oil himself, instead of sending up the price of building lots in Paris by rushing into land speculation, he would have lost his hundred thousand francs through Roguin, but he would not have gone bankrupt. He will start afresh under the name of Popinot."

"Keep an eye on Popinot," said Gigonnet.

According to this crowd of merchants, Roguin was "poor Roguin"; the perfumer was "that unlucky Birotteau." A great passion seemed to excuse the one, the other appeared the more to blame on account of his pretensions. Gigonnet left the Exchange, and took the Rue Perrin-Gasselin on his way home to the Rue Grenétat. He looked in on Mme. Madou, the dry fruit saleswoman.

"Well, old lady," said he, with his cruel good-humor, "and how are we getting on in our way of business?"

"Middling," said Mme. Madou respectfully, and she offered the money-lender her only armchair with a friendly deliciousness which she had never shown to any one else but the dear departed.

Mother Madou, who would fell a carman with a blow if he were refractory or carried a joke too far, who had not feared to assist at the storming of the Tuileries on the 10th of October, who railed at her best customers (for that matter, she was capable of heading a deputation of the Dames de la Halle, and speaking to the King himself without a tremor)—Angélique Madou received Gigonnet with the utmost respect. She was helpless in his presence; she winced under his hard eyes. It will be a long while yet before the executioner ceases to be a terror to the people, and Gigonnet was the executioner of the small traders. The man who sets money in circulation is more looked up to in the Great Market than any other power, all other human institutions are as nought compared with him. For them the Commissaire is Justice personified, and with the Commissaire they of the

Market become familiar. But the sight of the money-lender entrenched behind his green cardboard cases, of the usurer whom they implore with fear in their hearts, dries up the sources of wit, parches the throat, and abashes the bold eyes; the people grew respectful in his presence.

"Have you come to ask something of me?" said she.

"A mere trifle; be prepared to refund the amount of Birotteau's bills, the old man has gone bankrupt, so all outstanding claims must be sent in; I shall send you in a statement to-morrow."

The pupils of Mme. Madou's eyes first contracted like the eyes of a cat, then flames leapt forth from them.

"O the beggar! O the scamp! and he came here himself to tell me that he was deputy-mayor, piling on his lies! The Lord ha' mercy! That's just the way with business; there is no trusting mayors nowadays; the Government cheats us! You wait, I will have the money out of them, I will——"

"Eh! everyone comes out of this sort of thing the best way he can, my little dear!" said Gigonnet, lifting one leg with the precise little gesture of a cat picking its way among puddles, a trick to which he owed his nickname.* "Some swells have been let in who mean to get themselves out of the scrape——"

"Good! good! I will get my hazel-nuts out.—Marie Jeanne! my clogs and my lamb's-wool shawl. Quick! or I will lend you a clout that will warm your cheeks."

"That will make it hot for them yonder up the street," said Gigonnet to himself, as he rubbed his hands. "Du Tillet will be satisfied; there will be a scandal in the Quarter. What that poor devil of a perfumer can have done to him, I don't know; for my own part, I am as sorry for the man as for a dog with a broken paw. He isn't a man; he has no fight in him."

Mme. Madou broke out like an insurrection in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine towards seven o'clock that evening, and swept to the luckless Birotteau's door, which she opened with unnecessary violence, for her walk had had an exciting effect.

* Gigonnet, from *Gigotter*, to kick the legs about.

"Brood of vermin, I must have my money, I want my money! You give me my money! or I will have sachets and satin gimeracks and fans till I have the worth of my two thousand francs! A mayor robbing the people! Did any one ever see the like! If you don't pay me, I will send him to jail; I will go for the public prosecutor; I will put the whole posse of them on his tracks! I do not stir from here without my money, in fact."

She looked as if she would open the glass door of a cupboard in which expensive goods were kept.

"The Madou is helping herself," said Célestin, speaking in a low voice to his neighbor. The lady overheard the remark, for during a paroxysm of rage the senses are either deadened, or preternaturally alert, according to the temperament. She bestowed on Célestin the most vigorous box on the ear ever given and received in a perfumer's shop.

"Learn to respect women, my cherub," quoth she, "and not to bedraggle the names of the people you rob."

Mme. Birotteau came forward from the back shop. Her husband by chance was also there; in spite of Pillerault, he chose to remain, carrying his humility and obedience to the law so far as to be ready to submit to be put in prison. "Madame," said Constance, "for Heaven's sake, do not bring a crowd together in the street."

"Eh! let them come in," cried the saleswoman; "I will tell them about it; it will make them laugh! Yes, my goods and the francs I made by the sweat of my brow go for you to give balls. You go dressed like a Queen of France, forsooth, and fleece poor lambs like me for the wool! *Jésus!* stolen goods would burn *my* shoulders, I know! I have nothing but shoddy on my carcase, but it is my own! Bandits and thieves! my money, or——"

She pounced upon a pretty inlaid case full of costly perfumery.

"Leave it alone, madame," said César, appearing on the scene; "nothing here belongs to me, it is all the property of my creditors; I have nothing left but myself; and if you

have a mind to seize me and put me in jail, I give you my word of honor" (a tear overflowed his eyes at this) "that I will wait here for your process-server, police-officer, and bailiff's men."

From his tone and gesture, he evidently meant to do as he said; Mme. Madou's anger died down.

"A notary has absconded with my money, and the disasters which I cause come through no fault of mine," César went on; "but in time you shall be paid, if I have to work myself to death and earn the money by my hands as a market-porter."

"Come, you are a good man," said the market woman. "Excuse my speaking, madame; but I shall have to fling myself into the river, for Gigonnet will be down upon me, and I have nothing but bills at ten months to give for your cursed paper."

"Come round and see me to-morrow morning," said Pillerault, coming forward; "I will arrange the business for you at five per cent with a friend of mine."

"*Quien!* that is good Father Pillerault!—Why, yes, he is your uncle," she went on, turning to Constance. "Come, now, you are honest folk; I shall not lose anything, shall I? —Good-bye till to-morrow, old Brutus," she added, for the benefit of the retired ironmonger.

César insisted on remaining amid the ruins of his glory, and would hear of no other course; he said that by so doing he could explain his position to all his creditors. In this determination, Uncle Pillerault upheld César in spite of the entreaties of his niece. César was persuaded to go upstairs, and then the wily old man hurried to M. Haudry, put César's case before him, obtained a prescription for a sleeping-draught, had it made up, and went back to spend the evening in his nephew's house. With Césarine's assistance, he constrained César to drink as they did; the narcotic did its work; and fourteen hours later Birotteau awoke to find himself in Pillerault's own bedroom in the Rue des Bourdonnais, a prisoner in the house of his uncle, who slept on a camp bedstead put up in the sitting-room.

When Pillerault had put César into the cab, and Constance had heard it roll away, then her courage failed her. Our strength is often called forth by the necessity of sustaining some one weaker than ourselves; and the poor woman, now that she was left alone with her daughter, wept as she would have wept for César if he had been lying dead.

"Mamma," said Césarine, seating herself on her mother's knee, with the gracious kitten-like ways that women only display for each other, "you said that if I bore my part bravely, you would be able to face adversity. So do not cry, mother dear. I am ready to work in a shop; I will forget what we have been; I will be a forewoman, as you were when you were a girl; you shall never hear a regret or a complaint from me. And I have a hope. Did you not hear M. Popinot?"

"Dear boy! he shall not be my son-in-law."

"Oh! mamma——"

"He will be my own son."

"There is this one good thing about trouble, it teaches us to know our real friends," said Césarine; and, changing places with her mother, she at last comforted her, and soothed the poor woman's grief.

The next morning Constance left a note for the Duc de Lenoncourt, one of the first Gentlemen of the Bedchamber. She asked for an interview at a certain hour. Meanwhile, she went to M. de la Billardière, told him of the predicament in which César found himself in consequence of Roguin's flight from the country, and begged the mayor to give her his support with the Duke, and to speak for her, for she feared that she might express herself ill. She wanted some post for Birotteau. Birotteau would be the most honest of cashiers, if there are degrees in the quality of honesty.

"The King has just appointed the Comte de Fontaine as Comptroller-General of the Royal Household; there is no time to be lost."

At two o'clock La Billardière and Mme. César ascended the great staircase of the Hôtel de Lenoncourt in the Rue Saint-Dominique, and were brought into the presence of

one of the nobles highest in the King's favor, in so far as Louis XVIII. could be said to have preferences. The gracious reception accorded to her by a great noble, one of the little group who formed a connecting link between the eighteenth-century noblesse and those of the nineteenth, put hope into Mme. César. The perfumer's wife was great and simple in her sorrow; sorrow ennobles the most commonplace natures, for it has a grandeur of its own, but only those who are true and sincere can take its polish. Constance was essentially sincere. It was a question of prompt application to the King.

In the midst of the discussion, M. de Vandenesse was announced.

"Here is your deliverer," exclaimed the Duke.

Mme. Birotteau was not unknown to the young man, who had been once or twice to the perfumer's shop for those trifles which are often of as much importance as great things. The Duke explained La Billardière's views; and when Vandenesse learned the disasters, he went immediately with La Billardière to see the Comte de Fontaine on behalf of the Marquise d'Uxelles' godson. Mme. Birotteau was asked to await the result.

M. le Comte de Fontaine, like La Billardière, was one of the provincial noblesse, the almost unknown heroes of La Vendée. Birotteau was no stranger to him, for he had seen the perfumer at the *Queen of Roses* in former days. At that time, those who had shed their blood for the Royalist cause enjoyed privileges, which the King kept secret for fear of hurting Liberal susceptibilities, and M. de Fontaine, one of the King's favorites, was supposed to be in the confidence of Louis XVIII. Not only did this influential person definitely promise to obtain a post for the perfumer, but he went to the Duc de Lenoncourt, then in attendance, to ask him for a moment's speech with the King that evening, and to entreat for La Billardière an audience with Monsieur the King's brother, who had a particular regard for the old Vendean.

That very evening M. le Comte de Fontaine came from

the Tuileries to inform Mme. Birotteau that as soon as her husband had received his discharge, he would be appointed to a post worth two thousand five hundred francs per annum in the Sinking Fund Department, all places in the Household being at that time filled with noble supernumeraries to whom the Royalist family were bound.

This success was but a part of the task undertaken by Mme. Birotteau. The poor woman went to Joseph Lebas at the sign of the *Cat and Racket* in the Rue Saint-Denis. On the way thither she met Mme. Roguin in her showy carriage, doubtless on a shopping expedition. Their eyes met, and the visible confusion on the beautiful face of the notary's wife, at this meeting with the woman who had been brought to ruin, gave Constance courage.

"Never will I drive in a carriage paid for with other people's money," said she to herself.

Welcomed by Joseph Lebas, she asked him to look for a situation for her daughter in some respectable house of business. Lebas made no promises, but a week later it was arranged that Césarine should be placed in a branch of one of the largest drapery establishments in Paris, which had just been opened in the Quartier des Italiens. She was to live in the house, and to take charge of the shop and counting-house, with a salary of three thousand francs. She would represent the master and mistress, and the forewoman was to act under her orders.

As for Mme. César herself, she went on the same day to ask Popinot to allow her to take charge of the books, the correspondence, and the household. Popinot knew well that this was the one commercial house in which the perfumer's wife might take a subordinate position and still receive the respect due to her. The noble-hearted boy installed her in the house, gave her a salary of three thousand francs, arranged to give his own room to her, and went up into the attic. And so it came to pass that the beautiful woman, after a short month spent amid novel splendors, was compelled to take up her abode in the poor room where Gaudissart, Anselme, and Finot had inaugurated the Cephalic Oil.

The Tribunal of Commerce had appointed Molineux as agent, and he came to take formal possession of César's property. Constance, with Célestin's help, went through the inventory with him; and then mother and daughter went to stay with Pillerault. They went out on foot, and simply dressed, and without turning their heads, and this was their leave-taking of the house in which they had spent the third part of a lifetime. Silently they walked to the Rue des Bourdonnais, and dined with César, for the first time since their separation. It was a melancholy dinner. They had each had time to think over the position, to weigh the burden laid upon them, to estimate their courage. All three were like sailors, prepared to face the coming tempest without blinking the danger. Birotteau took heart again when he heard that great personages had interested themselves for him and provided for his future; but he broke down when he heard of the arrangement which had been made for his daughter. Then hearing how bravely his wife had begun to work again, he held out his hand to her.

Tears filled Pillerault's eyes for the last time in his life at the sight of this pathetic picture of the father, mother, and daughter united in one embrace; while Birotteau, the most helpless and downcast of the three, held up his hand and cried, "We must hope!"

"To save expense, you must live here with me; you shall have my room, and share my bread. For a long time past I have been tired of living alone; you will take the place of that poor boy I lost. And it will only be a step from here to your office in the Rue d'Oratoire."

"Merciful God!" cried Birotteau. "There is a star to guide me when the storm is at its height."

By resignation to his fate, the victim of a misfortune consumes his misfortune. Birotteau could fall no further; he had accepted the position; he became strong again.

In France when a merchant has filed his petition, the only thing he need trouble himself to do is to retreat to some oasis at home or abroad where he may passively exist like the child

that he is in the eye of the law; theoretically he is a minor, and incapable of acting in any capacity as a citizen.* Practically, however, he is by no means a nullity. He does not, indeed, show his face until he receives a "certificate of immunity from arrest" (which no registrar nor creditor has been known to refuse), for if he is found at large without it he is liable to be put in prison; but once provided with his safe conduct, his flag of truce, he can take a stroll through the enemy's camp, not from idle curiosity, but to counteract and thwart the evil intentions of the law with regard to bankrupts.

A prodigious development of perverse ingenuity is the direct result of any law which touches private interests. The one thought of a bankrupt, as of everybody else who finds his purposes crossed in any way by the law of the land, is how to evade it. The period of civil death, during which time a bankrupt must be considered as a kind of commercial chrysalis, lasts for three months or thereabouts, the interval required for the formalities which must be gone through before creditors and debtor sign a treaty of peace, otherwise known as a *concordat,* a word which indicates sufficiently clearly that concord reigns after the storm raised by the clashing of various interests which run counter to one another.

Directly the schedule is deposited, the Tribunal of Commerce appoints a registrar to watch over the interests of the throng of unascertained creditors on the one hand, and on the other to protect the bankrupt from the vexatious importunities and inroads of infuriated creditors, a double part which presents magnificent possibilities if registrars had but time to develop them. The registrar authorizes an agent by proclamation, to take formal possession of the bankrupt's property, bills, and effects, and the agent checks the statement of assets in the schedule; lastly, the clerk of the court convenes a meeting of creditors, by tuck of drum, that is to say, by ad-

* In France a bankrupt loses his civil and political status; he recovers the right of administering his own affairs after his discharge; but the disabilities are only removed by Rehabilitation. This is an order granted by the Court when it is proved that the bankrupt has paid debts and costs in full.

vertisements in the newspapers. The creditors, genuine or otherwise, are called upon to assemble and agree among themselves to appoint provisional trustees, who shall replace the agent, step into the bankrupt's shoes, and, by a legal fiction, become indeed the bankrupt himself. These have power to realize everything, to make compromises, or to sell outright; in short, to wind up the whole business for the benefit of the creditors, provided that the bankrupt makes no opposition. As a rule, in Paris the bankruptcy is not carried beyond the stage of the provisional trustees, and for the following reasons:

The nomination of trustees is a proceeding calculated to stir up more angry feeling than any other resolution which can be passed by an assembly of men, deluded, baffled, befooled, ensnared, bamboozled, robbed, cheated, and thirsting for vengeance; and albeit, as a general thing, the creditor is cheated, robbed, bamboozled, ensnared, befooled, baffled, and deluded, in Paris no commercial crisis, no feeling, however high, can last for three mortal months. Nothing in commerce but a bill of exchange is capable of starting up clamorous for payment at the expiration of ninety days. Before the three months are out, all the creditors, exhausted by the wear and tear, and worn out by the marches and counter-marches of the liquidation, sleep soundly by the side of their excellent little wives. These facts may enable those who are not Frenchmen to understand how it comes to pass that the appointment of provisional trustees is usually final; out of a thousand provisional trustees, there are not five who are appointed to carry the thing further. The reasons of the swift abjuration of commercial enmity which has its source in a failure may be imagined; but for those who have not the good fortune to be merchants, some explanation of the drama known as a bankruptcy is necessary if they are to comprehend how it constitutes the most monstrous legal farce in Paris, and understand the ordinary rule to which César's case was to be so marked an exception.

A failure in business is a thrilling drama in three distinct

ts. Act the first may be called The Agent; act the second, the Trustees; and act the third, The *Concordat,* or payment of composition. The spectacle is twofold, as is the case with plays performed on the stage; for there is the spectacular effect intended for the public, and the more or less invisible mechanism by which the effects are produced, and the same play if seen before and behind the scenes looks quite different from different points of view. In the wings stand the bankrupt and his attorney (one of the advocates who practise at the Tribunal of Commerce), and the trustees and agent and the registrar complete the list.

Nobody outside Paris knows what no Parisian can fail to know, that a registrar is the most extraordinary kind of magistrate which the freaks of civilization have devised. In the first place, he is a judge who, at every moment of his official life, may go in fear that his own measure may be dealt to him again. Paris has even seen the President of her Tribunal of Commerce compelled to file his petition; and the ordinary judge, who is called upon to act as a registrar, is no venerable merchant retired from business, whose magistracy is a tribute to a stainless career; but the active senior partner of some great house, a man burdened with the responsibility of vast enterprises. It is a *sine qua non* that a judge who is bound to give decisions on the torrents of commercial disputes which pour incessantly upon the capital shall have as much, or more, business of his own than he can manage.

Thus the Tribunal of Commerce, which might have been a useful transition stage and half-way house between the trading community and the regions of the *noblesse,* is composed of busy merchants, who may one day be made to suffer for unpopular awards, and a Birotteau among them may find a Du Tillet.

The judge or registrar, therefore, is of necessity a personage in whose presence a great deal is said to which perforce he lends an ear, thinking the while of his private concerns. He is very apt to leave public business in the hands of the trustees and the attorneys who practise at the Tribunal of

Commerce, unless some odd and unusual case turns up; some instance of theft under curious circumstances, to draw from him the remark that either the creditor or the debtor must be a clever fellow. This personage, set on high above the scene, like the portrait of a king in an audience-chamber, is to be seen of a morning from five to seven o'clock in his yard, if he is a timber merchant; in his shop, if, like Birotteau, he is a perfumer; and again, in the evening at dessert after dinner, but always and in any case terribly busy. For these reasons this functionary is usually dumb.

Let us do justice to the law; the registrar's hands are tied by the hasty legislation which provided for these matters; and many a time he sanctions frauds which he is powerless to hinder, as will shortly be seen.

The agent, instead of being the creditors' man, may play into the debtor's hands. Each creditor hopes to swell his share, and in some way to make better terms for himself with the bankrupt, whom every one suspects of a secret hoard. The agent can make something out of both sides, by dealing leniently with the bankrupt on the one hand, or on the other by securing something for the more influential creditors, and in this way can hold with the hare and run with the hounds. Not unfrequently a crafty agent has annulled a judgment by buying out the creditors and releasing the merchant, who springs up again at a rebound like an india-rubber ball.

The agent turns to the best furnished crib; he will, if necessary, cover the largest creditors and let the debtor go bare, or he will sacrifice the creditors to the merchant's future, as suits him best. So the whole drama turns on the first act; and the agent, like the attorney of the Tribunal, is the utility-man in a piece in which neither will play unless he is sure of his fees beforehand. In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, the agent is for the debtor.

At the time when this story took place, it was the practice of attorneys at the Tribunal of Commerce to go to the judge who was to act as registrar and nominate a man of their own, some one who knew something of the debtor's affairs and

could manage to reconcile the interests of the many and of the one—the honorable trader who had fallen into misfortune. Of late years it has been the practice of shrewd judges to wait till this has been done so as to avoid the nominee, and to make an effort to appoint a man of passable integrity.

During this first act the creditors, genuine or presumed, present themselves to select the provisional trustees, an appointment which, as has been said, is practically final. In this electoral assembly every creditor has a voice, whether his claim is for fifty sous or fifty thousand francs, and the votes are reckoned by count and not by weight. The names of the trustees are proposed at the meeting, packed by the debtor with sham creditors (the only ones who never fail to put in an appearance); and from the names thus sent in, the registrar, the powerless president, is *bound* to choose those who shall act. Naturally, therefore, the registrar takes the trustees from the debtor's hands, another abuse which turns this catastrophe into one of the most burlesque dramas sanctioned by a court of justice. The "honorable trader fallen into misfortune" is master of the situation, and proceeds to carry out a premeditated robbery with the law at his back. In Paris, as a rule, the petty tradesmen are blameless. Before a shopkeeper files his schedule, the poor honest fellow has left no stone unturned; he has sold his wife's shawl, and pawned his spoons and forks; and when he gives in at last, it is with empty hands, he is utterly ruined, and has not even money to pay the attorney, who troubles himself very little about his client.

The law demands that the *concordat*, which remits a part of the debt and restores the debtor to the management of his affairs, should be put to the vote and carried by a sufficient majority, with due regard to the amounts claimed by the creditors. To secure the majority is a great feat which demands the most skilful diplomacy on the part of the debtor, his attorney, and the trustees amid the clash of conflicting interests. The ordinary commonplace stratagem consists in offering to such a body of the creditors as will represent the ma-

jority required by the law, a premium to be paid over and above the dividend which the meeting of creditors is to consent to accept. For this gigantic swindle there is no remedy. Successive Tribunals of Commerce, familiar with it by dint of practice in non-official capacity, and grown wise by experience, have decided of late that all claims are made void where there is a suspicion of fraud; thus it is to the debtor's interest to complain of the "extortion," and the judges of the Tribunal hope in this way to raise the moral tone of proceedings in liquidation. But they will only succeed in making matters worse; creditors will exercise their ingenuity to invent still more rascally devices which the judges will brand as registrars, and profit by as merchants.

Another extremely popular expedient, which gave rise to the expression "serious and legitimate creditor," consists in creating creditors, much as du Tillet created a firm of bankers. By introducing a sufficient number of Claparons into the meeting, the debtor, in these diverse manifestations, receives a share of the spoils, and sensibly diminishes the dividends of the real creditors. This plan has a double advantage. The debtor obtains resources for the future, and at the same time secures the proper number of votes representing (to all appearance) a sufficient proportion of the claims upon the estate, the majority necessary for his discharge. These "gay bogus creditors" are like sham electors in the electoral college. What help has the "serious *bonâ-fide* creditor" against his "gay, bogus" compeer? He can rid himself of him by attacking him! Very good. But if the "serious and *bonâ-fide*" creditor means to oust the intruder, he must leave his own business to take care of itself, and he must employ an attorney; and as the said attorney makes little or nothing out of the case, he prefers to "conduct" bankruptcies, and does not take a bit of pettifogging business too seriously. Then, at the outset, before the "gay and bogus" one can be unearthed, a labyrinth of procedure must be entered upon, the bankrupt's books must be gone through to some remote epoch, and application must be made to the Court to require

that the books of the pretended creditor shall be likewise produced; the improbability of the fiction must be set forth and clearly proved to the satisfaction of the judges of the tribunal, and the serious creditor must come and go and spread and arouse interest in the indifferent. This Quixotic performance, moreover, must be gone through afresh in each separate case; and each gay and bogus creditor, if fairly convicted of "gaiety," makes his bow to the court with an "Excuse me, there is some mistake; I am very serious indeed." All this is done without prejudice to the rights of the debtor, who may appeal and bring Don Quixote into the Court-Royal. And in the meantime Don Quixote's own affairs go askew, and he too may be compelled to file his schedule.

Moral: Let the debtor choose his trustees, verify the claims, and arrange the amount of composition himself.

Given these conditions, who cannot imagine the underhand schemes, the tricks worthy of Scaramarelle, stratagems that a Frontin might have devised, the lies that would do credit to Mascarille, the empty wallets of a Scapin, and all the results of these two systems? Any bankruptcy since insolvency came into fashion would supply a writer with material sufficient to fill the fourteen volumes of *Clarissa Harlowe.* A single example shall suffice.

The illustrious Gobseck, the master at whose feet the Palmas, Gigonnets, Werbrusts, Kellers, and Nucingens of Paris have sat, once found himself among the creditors of a bankrupt who had managed to swindle him, and whom, on that account, he proposed to handle roughly. Of this person he received bills to fall due *after the discharge* for a sum which (taken together with the dividends received at the time) should pay the amount owing to him (Gobseck) in full. Gobseck, in consequence, recommended that a final dividend of twenty-five per cent be paid. Behold the creditors swindled for Gobseck' benefit! But the merchant had signed the illegal bills in the name of the insolvent firm; and when the time came, a dividend of twenty-five per cent was all that he could be made to pay upon them, and Gobseck, the great Gob-

seek, received a bare fifty per cent. He always took off his hat with ironical respect when he met that debtor.

As all transactions which take place within ten days before the time when a man files his schedule are open to question, certain prudent prospective bankrupts are careful to break ground early, and to approach some of their creditors, whose interest it is, not less than their own, to arrive at a prompt settlement. Then the more astute creditors will go in search of the simple or of the very busy, paint the failure in the darkest colors, and finally buy up their claims for half their value. When the estate is liquidated, these shrewd folk come by the dividend on their own share, and make fifty, thirty, or twenty-five per cent on the liabilities which they have purchased, and in this way contrive to lose nothing.

After the failure is declared, the house in which a few bags of money yet remain from the pillage is more or less hermetically sealed. Happy the merchant who can effect an entrance by the window, the roof, the cellar, or a hole in the wall, and secure a bag to swell his share! When things have come to this pass, this Beresina, where the cry of "Each for himself" has been raised, it is hard to say what is illegal or legal, false or true, honest or dishonest. A creditor is thought a clever fellow if he "covers himself": that is to say, if he secures himself at the expense of the rest. All France once rang with discussion of a prodigious failure, which took place in a certain city where there was a Court-Royal: the magistrates therein being all personally interested in the case, arrayed their shoulders in waterproof cloaks so heavy, that the mantle of justice was worn into holes, on which grounds it was necessary to transfer the affair into another court. There was no registrar, no agent, no final judgment possible in the bankrupt's own district.

In Paris these commercial quicksands are so thoroughly well appreciated, that every merchant, however much time he may have on his hands, accepts the loss as an uninsured accident: and, unless he is involved for some very large sum, passes the matter to the wrong side of his profit and loss ac-

count. He is not so foolish as to waste time over wasted money; he prefers to keep his own pot boiling. As for the little trader, hard put to it to pay his monthly accounts, and tied to the narrow round of his own business, tedious law proceedings, involving a heavy initial outlay, scare him; he gives up the attempt to see through the matter, follows the example of the great merchant, and makes up his mind to his loss. Wholesale merchants do not file their schedule in these days; they liquidate by private arrangement; their creditors take what is offered them, and give a receipt in full; a plan which saves publicity, and the delays of the law, and solicitors' fees, and depreciation of stock consequent on a sudden realization. It is a common belief that it pays better to have a private arrangement than to force the estate into bankruptcy, so private arrangements are more frequent than failures in Paris.

The second act of the drama is intended to prove that a trustee is incorruptible; that there is not the slightest attempt at collusion between them and the debtor. The audience, who have most of them been at some time cast for the part of trustees themselves, know that a trustee is another name for a creditor whose claims are "covered." He listens, and believes as much as he pleases, till, after three months spent in investigating liabilities and assets, the day comes when composition is offered and accepted. Then the provisional trustees read a little report for the assembled creditors. The following is a general formula:

"GENTLEMEN,—The total amount owing to us was one million. We have dismantled our man like a stranded frigate. The sale of old iron, timber, and copper has brought in three hundred thousand francs, the assets therefore amount to thirty per cent of the liabilities. In our joy at finding this sum, when our debtor might have left us a bare hundred thousand francs, we proclaim him to be an Aristides. We vote him crowns and a premium by way of encouragement! We propose to leave him his assets, and to give him ten or a dozen years in which to pay us the dividend of fifty per cent, which

he condescends to promise us. Here is the *concordat,* walk up to the desk, and put your names to it!"

At these words the happy creditors fall on each other's necks and congratulate one another. When the *concordat* has been ratified by the Tribunal, the merchant's assets are put at his disposition, and he begins business again as if nothing had happened. He is at liberty to fail once more over the payment of the promised dividends—a sort of great-grandchild of a failure, which not seldom appears like an infant borne by a mother nine months after she has married her daughter.

If the *concordat* is not accepted, the creditors forthwith make a final appointment of trustees. They resort to extreme measures, and band themselves together to exploit the debtor's property and business; they lay their hands on everything he has or may have, his reversionary rights in the property of father and mother, uncles and aunts, and the like. This is a desperate remedy found by a "union of the creditors."

If a man fails in business, therefore, there are two ways open to him; by the first method, he takes things into his own hands, and means to recover himself; in the second, having fallen into the water, he is content to go to the bottom. Pillerault knew the difference well. He was of Ragon's opinion, that it was as hard to issue from the first experience with clean hands as to emerge from the second a wealthy man. He counseled surrender at discretion, and betook himself to the most upright attorney on 'Change, asking him to conduct the liquidation, and to put the proceeds at the disposition of the creditors. The law requires that the creditors should make an allowance for the support of the debtor and his family while the drama is in progress. Pillerault gave notice to the registrar that he himself would maintain his niece and nephew.

Du Tillet had planned everything with a view to prolonging the agony of his old master's failure, and in the following manner. Time is so valuable in Paris, that, though there

are usually two trustees appointed, one only acts in the case; the other is nominated for form's sake; he approves the proceedings, like the second notary in a notarial deed; and the active trustee as often as not leaves the work to the attorney employed by the bankrupt. By these means a failure of the first kind is conducted so vigorously that everything is patched up, fixed, settled, and arranged during the minimum time required by the legal procedure. In a hundred days the registrar might repeat the cold-blooded epigram of the Minister who announced that "Order reigns in Warsaw."

Du Tillet meant to make an end of César, commercially speaking. So the names of the trustees appointed through his influence had an ominous sound for Pillerault. M. Bidault, otherwise Gigonnet, the principal creditor, was to do nothing. Molineux, the fidgety little old person who had lost nothing, was to do everything. Du Tillet had thrown this noble corpse of a business to the little jackal to worry before he devoured it.

Little Molineux went home after the meeting of creditors at which the trustees were appointed, "honored" (so he put it) "by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens," and as happy in the prospect of domineering over Birotteau as an urchin who has an insect to torment. The owner of house-property, being a stickler for the law, bought a copy of the *Code of Commerce,* and asked du Tillet to give him the benefit of his lights. Luckily, Joseph Lebas, forewarned by Pillerault, had, at the outset, obtained a sagacious and benevolent registrar, and Gobenheim-Keller (on whom du Tillet had fixed his choice) was replaced by M. Camusot, an assistant judge, and Pillerault's landlord, a Liberal, and a rich silk merchant, spoken of as an honorable man.

One of the most dreadful scenes in César's life was his enforced conference with little Molineux; the creature whom he had looked upon as such a nullity was now, by legal fiction, become César Birotteau. There was no help for it; so, accompanied by his uncle, he climbed the six pair of stairs in the Cour Batave, reached the old man's dismal room, and con-

fronted his guardian, his *quasi* judge, the man who represented the body of his creditors.

"What is the matter?" Pillerault asked on the stairs, hearing a groan from César.

"Oh! uncle, you do not know what kind of a man this Molineux is."

"I have seen him at the Café David these fifteen years; he plays a game of dominoes there of an evening now and then. That is why I came with you."

Molineux was prodigiously civil to Pillerault, and his manner towards the bankrupt was contemptuously patronizing. The little old man had thought out his course, studied his behavior down to the minutest details, and his ideas were ready prepared.

"What information do you want?" asked Pillerault. "None of the claims are disputed."

"Oh! the claims are all in order," said little Molineux; "they are all verified. The creditors are serious and *bonâ-fide!* But there's the law, sir; there's the law! The bankrupt's expenditure is out of proportion to his means. It appears that the ball ——"

"At which you were an invited guest," put in Pillerault.

"Cost nearly sixty thousand francs! At any rate, that amount was spent on the occasion, and the debtor's capital at that time only amounted to a hundred and some odd thousand francs! There is warrant sufficient for bringing the matter before a registrar-extraordinary, as a case of bankruptcy caused by serious mismanagement."

"Is that your opinion?" asked Pillerault, who noticed Birotteau's despondency at those words.

"Sir, the said Birotteau was a municipal officer, that makes a difference——"

"You did not send for us, I suppose, to tell us that the case was to be transferred to a criminal court," said Pillerault. "The whole Café David would laugh this evening at your conduct."

The little old man seemed to stand in some awe of the

opinion of the Café David; he gave Pillerault a scared look. He had reckoned upon dealing with Birotteau alone, and had promised himself that he would pose as sovereign lord and Jupiter. He had meant to strike terror into Birotteau's soul by the thunderbolts of a formal indictment, to brandish the axe above his head, to enjoy the spectacle of his anguish and alarm, and then to relent at the prayer of his victim, and send him away with eternal gratitude in his soul. But instead of the insect, he was confronted with this business-like old sphinx.

"There is nothing whatever to laugh at, sir!" said he.

"I beg your pardon," returned Pillerault. "You are consulting M. Claparon pretty freely; you are neglecting the interests of the other creditors to obtain a decision that you have preferential claims. Now I, as a creditor, can intervene. The registrar is there."

"Sir," said Molineux, "I am incorruptible."

"I know you are," said Pillerault; "you are only getting yourself out of the scrape, as the saying is. You are shrewd; you have done as you did in the case of that tenant of yours——"

"Oh! sir, my lawsuit in the matter of the Rue Montorgueil is not decided yet!" cried the trustee, slipping back into the landlord at the word, just as the cat who became a woman pounced upon the mouse. "A new issue, as they say, has been raised. It is not a sub-tenancy; he holds direct, and the lamp says now that as he paid his rent a year in advance, and there is only a year to run" (at this point Pillerault gave César a glance which recommended the closest attention to what should follow), "and the year's rent being prepaid, he might clear his furniture out of the premises. So there is a new lawsuit. As a matter of fact, I ought to look after my guarantees until I am paid in full; there may be repairs which the tenant ought to pay for."

"But you cannot distrain except for rent," remarked Pillerault.

"And accessories!" cried Molineux, attacked in the centre.

"The article in the Code is interpreted by the light of decisions; there are precedents. The law, however, certainly wants mending in this respect. At this moment I am drafting a petition to his lordship the Keeper of the Seals concerning the hiatus. It would become the Government to consider the interests of owners of property. The State depends upon us, for we bear the brunt of the taxes."

"You are well qualified to enlighten the Government," said Pillerault; "but on what point in this business of ours can we throw any light for you?"

"I want to know," said Molineux with imperious emphasis, "whether M. Birotteau has received any money from M. Popinot."

"No, sir," answered Birotteau. A discussion followed as to Birotteau's interest in the firm of Popinot, in the course of which it was decided that Popinot had a right to demand the repayment of his advances in full without putting in his claim under the bankruptcy as one of Birotteau's creditors for the half of the expenses of starting his business, which Birotteau ought to have paid. Gradually, under Pillerault's handling, Molineux became more and more civil, a symptom which proved that he set no little store on the opinion of the frequenters of the Café David. Before the interview ended he was condoling with Birotteau, and asked him no less than Pillerault to share his humble dinner. If the ex-perfumer had gone by himself, he would perhaps have exasperated Molineux, and brought rancor into the business; and now, as at some other times, old Pillerault played the part of guardian angel.

One horrible form of torture the law inflicts upon bankrupts; they are bound to appear in person with the provisional trustees and the registrar at the meeting of creditors which decides their fate. For a man who can rise above it, as for the merchant who is seeking his *revanche*, the dismal ceremony is not very formidable; but for any one like César the whole thing is an agony only paralleled by the last day in the condemned cell. Pillerault did all in his power to make that day endurable to his nephew.

Molineux's proceedings, sanctioned by the bankrupt, had been on this wise. The lawsuit concerning the mortgage on the property in the Faubourg du Temple had been gained in the Court of Appeal. The trustees decided to sell the land, and César made no objections. Du Tillet, knowing that the Government meant to construct a canal to open communication between Saint-Denis and the Upper Seine, and that the canal would pass through the Faubourg du Temple, bought César's property for seventy thousand francs. César's rights in the Madeleine building-land were abandoned to M. Claparon, on condition that he on his side should make no demand for half the registration fees, which César should have paid on the completion of the contract; it was arranged that Claparon should take over the land and pay for it, and receive the dividend in the bankruptcy which was due to the vendors.

The perfumer's interest in the firm of Popinot & Company was sold to the said Popinot for forty-eight thousand francs. Célestin Crevel bought the business as a going concern for fifty-seven thousand francs, together with the lease of the premises, the stock, the fittings, the proprietary rights in the Pâte des Sultanes and Carminative Toilet Lotion, a twelve years' lease of the factory and the plant being included in the sale.

The liquid assets reached a total of one hundred and ninety-five thousand francs, to which the trustees added seventy thousand francs from the liquidation of "that unlucky fellow Roguin." Two hundred and sixty-five thousand francs in all. The liabilities amounted to about four hundred and forty thousand francs, so that there would be a dividend of more than fifty per cent.

A liquidation is something like a chemical process, from which the clever insolvent merchant endeavors to emerge as a saturated solution. Birotteau, distilled entirely in this retort, yielded a result which infuriated du Tillet. Du Tillet thought that there would be a dishonoring bankruptcy, and behold a liquidation highly creditable to his man. He

cared very little about the pecuniary gain, for he would have the building-land by the Madeleine without opening his purse; he wished to see the poor merchant disgraced, ruined, and humbled in the dust. The meeting of creditors would doubtless carry out the perfumer in triumph on their shoulders.

As Birotteau's courage returned, his uncle, like a wise physician, gradually told him the details of the proceedings in bankruptcy. These rigorous measures were so many heavy blows. A merchant cannot but feel depressed when the things on which he has spent so much money and so much thought are sold for so little. He was petrified with astonishment at the tidings which Pillerault brought.

"Fifty-seven thousand francs for the *Queen of Roses!* Why, the stock is worth ten thousand francs! We spent forty thousand francs on the rooms, and the fittings, the plant, the moulds and boilers over at the factory cost thirty thousand francs! Why if the things are sold for half their value, there is the worth of ten thousand francs in the shop, and the Pâte des Sultanes and the Lotion are as good as a farm!"

Poor ruined César's jeremiads did not alarm Pillerault very much. The old merchant took them much as a horse takes a shower of rain; but when he came to talk of the meeting of creditors, César's gloomy silence frightened him. Those who understand the weakness and vanity of human nature in every social sphere, will understand that for an ex-judge a return as a bankrupt to the Palais where he had sat was a ghastly form of torture. He must receive his enemies in the very place where he had been so often thanked for his services; he, Birotteau, whose views as to bankruptcy were so well known in Paris, he who had said, "A man who files his schedule is an honest man still, but by the time he comes out of a meeting of creditors he is a rogue." His uncle watched for favorable opportunities, and tried to accustom him to the idea of appearing before his creditors assembled, as the law requires. This condition was killing Birotteau.

dumb resignation made a deep impression on Pillerault, through the thin partition wall, used to hear him cry at t. "Never! never! I will die sooner."

lerault, so strong himself by reason of his simple life, stood weakness. He made up his mind to spare Bi- au the anguish to which his nephew might succumb. dreadful and inevitable meeting with his creditors! The s precise, positive, and unflinching in this respect; the r who refuses to appear is liable on these grounds alone ve his case transferred out of the commercial into the nal court. But if the law compels the appearance of ebtor, it exercises no such constraint upon the creditors. meeting of creditors is a mere formality except in cer- cases; when, for example, a rogue is to be ousted, or the tors unite to refuse the dividend offered, or cannot among themselves because some of their number are leged to the prejudice of the rest, or the dividend d is outrageously small, and the bankrupt is doubtful taining a majority to carry the resolution. But when tate has been honestly liquidated, or when a rascally r has squared everybody, the meeting is only a matter m. So Pillerault went round to the creditors one after er, and asked each to empower his attorney to represent on that occasion. Every creditor, du Tillet excepted, was for Birotteau now that he had been brought low. All em knew how he had behaved, how well his books had kept, and how straightforward he had been in the mat- They were well pleased to find not one "gay" creditor ng their number. Molineux, as agent in the first place, fterwards as trustee, had found all that the poor man ssed, down to the print of *Hero and Leander* which Po- had given him. Birotteau had not taken away such matters as his gold-buckles, his pin, and the two es, which even an honest man might not have scrupled p. This touching obedience to the law made a great ion in commercial circles. Birotteau's enemies repre- these things as conclusive signs of the man's stupidity;

but sensible people saw them in their true light, as a magnificent excess of honesty. In two months a change had been brought about in opinion on 'Change. The most indifferent admitted that this failure was one of the greatest curiosities of commerce ever heard of. So when the creditors knew that they were to receive sixty per cent, they agreed to do all that Pillerault asked of them. There are but few attorneys practising at the Tribunal; so several of the creditors deputed the same man to represent them, and the whole formidable assemblage was reduced to three attorneys, Ragon, the two trustees, and the registrar.

"César, you can go without fear to your meeting to-day; you will find nobody there," Pillerault said on the morning of that memorable day.

M. Ragon wished to go with his debtor. At the sound of the thin elderly voice of the previous owner of the *Queen of Roses*, all the color left his successor's face; but the kind little old man held out his arms, and Birotteau went to him like a child to his father, and both shed tears. This indulgent goodness put fresh heart into César, and he followed his uncle to the cab.

Punctually at half-past three they arrived in the Clôitre Saint-Merri, where the Tribunal of Commerce then held its sessions. The Salle des Faillites was deserted. The day and the hour had been fixed to that end with the approbation of the trustees and the registrar. The attorneys were there on behalf of their clients; there was nothing to fill César's soul with dread; and yet the poor man could not enter M. Camusot's room (which had once been his) without deep emotion, and he shuddered as he went through the Salle des Faillites.

"It is cold," said M. Camusot, turning to Birotteau; "these gentlemen will not be sorry to stay here instead of being frozen in the Salle." (He would not say the Salle des Faillites.) "Seat yourselves, gentlemen."

Every one sat down; the registrar put César, still confused, into his own armchair. Then trustees and attorneys signed their names.

"In consideration of the abandonment of your estate," said Camusot, again addressing Birotteau, "your creditors unanimously agree to forego the remainder of their claims; your *concordat* is couched in language which may soften your reverses; your attorney will have it confirmed by the Tribunal at once. So you are discharged. All the judges of the Tribunal have felt sorry that you should be placed in such a position, Mr. M. Birotteau, without being surprised by your courage." Camusot went on, taking Birotteau's hands, "and there is no one but appreciates your integrity. Through your disasters you have shown yourself worthy of the position which you held here. I have been in business these twenty years, and this is the second time that I have seen a merchant rise in public esteem 'after his failure.'"

Birotteau grasped the registrar's hand and squeezed it. There were tears in his eyes. Camusot asked him what he intended to do, and Birotteau answered that he was going to work, and that he intended to pay his creditors in full.

"If you should be in want of a few thousand francs to carry out your noble design you will always find them if you come to me," said Camusot; "I would give them with great pleasure to see a thing not often seen in Paris."

Pillerault, Ragon, and Birotteau left the Tribunal.

"Well, was it so bad after all?" said Pillerault, when they stood outside.

"I can see your hand in it, uncle," said César, deeply blushed.

"And now that you are on your feet again, come and see your nephew," said Ragon; "it is only a step to the Rue des Grands-Diamants."

It was with a cruel pang that César looked up and saw Constance sitting at her desk in a room on the low dark floor behind the shop; dark, for a signboard outside, on which the words "A. Popinot" was painted, cut off one-third of the light from the window.

"Here is one of Alexander's lieutenants," said Birotteau, pointing to the sign with the forced mirth of misfortune.

This constrained gaiety, the naive expression of Birotteau's old belief in his superior talents, made Ragon shudder, despite his seventy years. But César's cheerfulness broke down when his wife brought down letters for Popinot to sign, and his face turned white in spite of himself.

"Good-evening, dear," she said, smiling at him.

"I need not ask whether you are comfortable here," César said, and he looked at Popinot.

"I might be in my own son's house," she said, and her husband was struck by the tender expression which crossed her face.

Birotteau embraced Popinot, saying, "I have just lost for ever the right to call you my son."

"Let us hope," said Popinot. "*Your* Oil is going well, thanks to our efforts in the newspapers, and thanks to Gaudissart, who has been all over, and flooded France with placards and prospectuses. He is having prospectuses in German printed at Strasbourg, and is just about to descend on Germany like an invasion. We have orders for three thousand gross."

"Three thousand gross!" echoed César.

"And I have bought some land in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, not badly; a factory is to be built there. I shall keep on at the other place in the Faubourg du Temple."

"With a little help, wife," Birotteau said to Constance-César, "we shall pull through."

From that memorable day César and his wife and daughter understood one another. Poor clerk, as he was, he had set himself a task which, if not impossible, was gigantic: he would pay his creditors in full! The three, united by a common bond of fierce independence, grew miserly, and denied themselves everything; every farthing was consecrated to the end. Césarine, with one object in her mind, threw herself into her work with a young girl's devotion. She spent her nights in devising schemes for increasing the prosperity of the house; she invented designs for materials, and brought her inborn business faculties into play. Her employers were

ged to check her ardor for work, and rewarded her with sents, but she declined the ornaments and trinkets which offered; it was money that she preferred. Every month took her salary, her little earnings, to her Uncle Pillet, and César and Mme. Birotteau did the same. All three them recognized their lack of ability, and shrank from ming the responsible task of investing their savings. So uncle went into business again, and studied the money rket. At a later time it was known that Jules Desmarets l Joseph Lebas had helped him with their counsel; both l zealously looked for safe investments.

Birotteau, living in his uncle's house, did not even dare ask any questions about the uses to which the family savs were put. He went through the streets with a bent head, rinking from all eyes, downcast, nervous, blind to all that sed. It vexed him that he must wear fine cloth.

"At any rate, I am not eating my creditors' bread," he said, th an angelic glance at the kind old man. "Your bread is et" (he went on), "although you give it me out of pity, n I think that, thanks to this sacred charity, I am not bbing my creditors of my earnings."

The merchants who met the Birotteau of those days could t see a trace of the Birotteau whom they used to know. Vast ughts were awakened in indifferent beholders at sight of t face so dark with the blackest misery, of the man who d never been thoughtful so bowed down beneath the weight thought; it was a revelation of the depths, in that this ng, dwelling on so ordinary a human level, could have had far to fall. To the man who would fain be wiped out comes xtinction. Shallow natures who lack a conscience, and incapable of much feeling, can never furnish forth the gedy of man and fate. Religion alone sets its peculiar l on those who have sounded these depths; they believe a future and in a Providence; a certain light shines in em, a look of holy resignation, blended with hope, which ches those who behold it; they know all that they have st, like the exiled angel weeping at the gates of Heaven.

A bankrupt cannot show his face on 'Change; and César, thrust out from the society of honest men, was like the angel sighing for pardon.

For fourteen months César refused all amusements; his mind was full of religious thoughts, inspired by his fall. Since though he was of the Ragons' friendship, it was impossible to induce him to dine with them; nor would he visit the Lebas, nor the Matifats, the Protez and Chiffrevilles, nor even M. Vauquelin, though all were anxious to show their admiration for César's behavior. He would rather be alone in his own room, where he could not meet the eyes of any one to whom he owed money; and the most cordial kindness on the part of his friends recalled him to a sense of the bitterness of his position.

Constance and Césarine went nowhere. On Sundays and holidays, the only times when they were free, the two women went first to Mass, and then home with César after the service. Pillerault used to ask the Abbé Loraux to come—the Abbé Loraux who had sustained César in his trouble—and they made a family party. The old ironmonger could not but approve his nephew's scruples, his own sense of commercial honor was too keen; and therefore his mind was bent upon increasing the number of people whom the bankrupt might look in the face with a clear brow.

In May 1821 the efforts of the family thus struggling with adversity were rewarded by a holiday, contrived by the arbiter of their destinies. The first Sunday in that month was the anniversary of the betrothal of César and Constance. Pillerault and the Ragons had taken a little house in the country at Sceaux, and the old ironmonger wanted to make a festival of the house-warming.

On the Saturday evening he spoke to his nephew. "We are going into the country to-morrow, César," he said, "and you must come too."

César, who wrote a beautiful hand, copied documents for Derville and several other lawyers in the evenings, and on Sundays (with a dispensation from the curé) he worked like a negro.

"No," he answered; "M. Derville is waiting for an account f a guardianship."

"Your wife and daughter deserve a holiday, and there will no one but our friends—the Abbé Loraux, the Ragons, d Popinot and his uncle. Besides, I want you to come."

César and his wife, carried away by the daily round of ir busy lives, had never gone back to Sceaux, though from me to time they both had wished to see the garden again, nd the lime-tree beneath which César had almost swooned vith joy, in the days when he was still an assistant at the *Queen of Roses.* To-day, when Popinot drove them, and Birotteau sat with Constance and their daughter, his wife's es turned to his from time to time, but the look of intelligence in them drew no answering smile from his lips. She whispered a few words in his ear, but a shake of the head as the only response. The sweet expressions of tenderness, nalterable, but now forced somewhat, brought no light into César's eyes; his face grew gloomier, the tears which he had ept back began to fill his eyes. Twenty years ago he had een along this very road, when he was young and prosperis and full of hope, the lover of a girl as lovely as Césarine, o was with them now. Then he had dreamed of happiness come; to-day he saw his noble child's face, pale with long urs of work, and his brave wife, of whose great beauty there mained such traces as are left to a beautiful city after the va flood has poured over it. Of all that had been, love alone s left. César's attitude repressed the joy in the girl's art and in Anselme, the two who now represented the ers of that bygone day.

"Be happy, children; you deserve to be happy," said the or father, in heartrending tones. "You can love each other ith no after-thoughts," added he; and as he spoke, he took th his wife's hands in his and kissed them with a reverent, miring affection which touched her more than the brightst cheerfulness. Pillerault, the Ragons, the Abbé Loraux, d Popinot the elder were all waiting for them at the house; ere was an understanding among those five kindly souls,

and their manners, and looks, and words put César at his ease, for it went to their hearts to see him always as if on the morrow of his fall.

"Take a walk in the Bois d'Aulnay," said Pillerault, putting César's hand into his wife's hand. "Go and take Anselme and Césarine with you, and come back again at four o'clock."

"Poor things, we are in the way," said Mme. Ragon, touched by her debtor's unfeigned misery; "he will be very happy before long."

"It is a repentance without the sin," said the Abbé Loraux.

"He could only have grown great through misfortune," said the judge.

The power of forgetting is the great secret of strong and creative natures; they forget after the manner of nature, who knows nothing of a past; with every hour she begins afresh the constant mysterious workings of fertility. But weak natures, like Birotteau, take their sorrows into their lives instead of transmuting them into the axioms of experience; and, steeping themselves in their troubles, wear themselves out by reverting daily to the old unhappiness.

When the two couples had found the footpath which leads to the Bois d'Aulnay, set like a crown on one of the loveliest of the low hills about Paris; when the Vallée-aux-Loups lay below them in its enchanting beauty, the bright day, the charm of the view, the fresh green leaves about them, and delicious memories of that fairest day of their youth, relaxed the chords which grief had strung to resonance in César's soul; he held his wife's arm tightly against his beating heart; his eyes were glazed no longer, a glad light shone in them.

"At last I see you again, my dear César," Constance said. "It seems to me that we are behaving well enough to allow ourselves a little pleasure from time to time."

"How can I?" poor Birotteau answered. "Oh! Constance, your love is the one good left to me. I have lost everything, even the confidence that I used to have in myself. I have no heart left in me; I want to live long enough to pay my

[illegible] on earth before I die, and that is all. You, dear, who [illegible] been w[illegible]om and prudence for me, who saw things [illegible]arly, you w[illegible] are not to blame, may be glad. Among us [illegible]ee, I am the only guilty one. Eighteen months ago, at that [illegible]lucky ball, I saw this Constance of mine, the only woman [illegible]om I have loved, more beautiful perhaps than the young [illegible]l with whom I wandered along this path twenty years ago, [illegible] our children are wandering together now. . . . . In less [illegible]an two years I have blighted that beauty, my pride, and I [illegible]d a right to be proud of it. I love you [illegible] as I love you [illegible]ter. . . . . Oh! dearest!" and his tone gave the word [illegible] eloquence that went to his wife's heart, "if you [illegible] I might [illegible]ear you scold me, instead of soothing my distress."

"I did not think it possible," she said, "that a woman [illegible]ld love her husband more after twenty years of life to[illegible]ther."

For a moment César forgot all his troubles at the words [illegible] brought such a wealth of happiness to a heart like his. [illegible] was with something like joy in his soul that he went to[illegible]rds *their* tree, which by some chance had not been cut [illegible]wn. Husband and wife sat down beneath it and watched [illegible]nselme and Césarine, who walked to and fro on the same [illegible]t of grass, unconscious of their [illegible], praying per[illegible]ps that they were still [illegible].

"Mademoiselle," [illegible] think me [illegible] base and so greedy as to [illegible] the fact that I [illegible]n your father's interest [illegible]? I have care[illegible]lly set aside his share of the [illegible] keeping them [illegible] him. I am adding interest to the [illegible] if there are any [illegible]btful debts, I pass them to my own account. We can only [illegible]ong to each other when your father has been rehabilitated; [illegible]m trying with all the strength that love gives me to bring [illegible] day soon."

He had carefully kept his secret from Césarine's mother; [illegible] the simplest lover is always anxious to be great in his [illegible]'s eyes.

"And will it come soon?" she asked.

"Very soon," said Popinot.

The tone in which the answer was given was so [illegible]trating, that the innocent and pure-hearted girl held up her [illegible] forehead for her lover's kiss, fervent and respectful, for César [illegible]'s noble nature had spoken so plainly in the impulse.

"Everything is going well, papa," she said, with the air of one who knows a great deal. "Be nice, and talk, and don't look so sad any longer."

When these four people, so closely bound together, returned to Pillerault's new house, César, unobservant though he was, felt from the Ragons' altered manner that something was impending. Mme. Ragon was peculiarly gracious; her look and tone said plainly to César, "We are paid."

After dinner the notary of Sceaux appeared. Pillerault asked him to be seated, and glanced at Birotteau, who began to suspect some surprise, though he did not imagine how great it would be. Pillerault began:

"Your savings for eighteen months, nephew, and those of your wife and daughter amount to twenty thousand francs. I received thirty thousand francs in the shape of dividend, so we have fifty thousand francs to divide among your creditors. M. Ragon has received thirty thousand francs as dividend; so this gentleman, who is the notary of Sceaux, is about to hand you a receipt in full for principal and interest, paid to your friends. The rest of the money is with Crottat for Lourdois, old Mme. Madou, the builder, and the carpenter, and the more pressing of your creditors. Next year we shall see. One can go a long way with time and patience."

Birotteau's joy cannot be described; he embraced his uncle, and shed tears.

"Let him wear his Cross to-day," said Ragon, addressing the Abbé Loraux, and the confessor fastened the red ribbon to César's buttonhole. A score of times that evening he looked at himself in the mirrors on the walls of the sitting-room with a delight which people who believe themselves to be superior would laugh at; but these good-hearted citizens saw nothing

unnatural in it. The next day Birotteau went to see Mme. Madou.

"Oh! is that you!" she cried; "I did not know you, old man, you have grown so gray. Still, the like of you don't come to grief; there are places under Government for you. I myself am working as hard as a poodle that turns a spit, and deserves to be christened."

"But, madame——"

"Oh, I'm not blaming you," she said; "you had your discharge."

"I have come to tell you that I will pay you the balance to-day, at Maître Crottat's office, and interest also——"

"Really?"

"You must be there at half-past eleven."

"There's honesty for you! good measure, and thirteen to the dozen," cried she, in outspoken admiration. "Stop, sir, I do a good trade with that red-haired youngster of yours; he is a nice young fellow; he lets me make my profit without haggling over the price, so as to make up to me for the loss. Well, then, I will give you the receipt; keep your money, poor old soul! La Madou fires up like tinder, she hollers out, but she has something here," and she tapped the most ample cushion of live flesh ever known in the Great Market.

"Never!" said Birotteau, "the law is explicit; I mean to pay you in full."

"Then there is no need to keep on begging and praying of me. And to-morrow at the Market I will sound your praises; they shall all know about you. Oh! it is a rare joke!"

The worthy man went through the same scene again with the house-painter, Crottat's father-in-law, but with some variations. It was raining. César left his umbrella in a corner by the door, and the well-to-do house painter, sitting at breakfast with his wife in a handsomely furnished room, saw the stream of water trickle across the floor, and was not too considerate.

"Hallo, poor old Birotteau, what do you want?" he asked, in the hard tone which people use to a tiresome beggar.

"H[illegible] your son-in-law asked you, sir [illegible]"

"Wh[illegible]" Lourdois broke in impatiently. Some request was to follow the thought.

"To [illegible] this morning at half-past eleven, to give me a receipt in full for the balance of your claim."

"Oh! that is another thing! Just sit you down, M. Birotteau, and [illegible]"

"Do us the honor of breakfasting with us," said Mme. Lourdois.

"Doing pretty well?" asked her burly spouse.

"No, sir. I have had to lunch off a roll in my office to get some money together, but I hope in time to repair the wrong done to my neighbors."

"Really, you are a man of honor," remarked the house-painter, as he swallowed a mouthful of bread and butter and Strasbourg pie.

"And what is Mme. Birotteau doing?" asked Mme. Lourdois.

"She is keeping the books in M. Anselme Popinot's counting-house."

"Poor things!" said Mme. Lourdois, in a low voice.

"If you should want me, come and see me, my dear M. Birotteau," began Lourdois; "I might be of use——"

"I want you at eleven o'clock, sir," said Birotteau, and with that he went.

This first result gave Birotteau fresh courage, but it did not give him peace of mind. The desire to redeem his character perturbed him beyond all measure. He completely lost the bloom which used to appear in his face, his eyes grew dull, his cheeks hollow. Old acquaintances who met him at eight o'clock in the morning, or after four in the afternoon on his way to and from the Rue de l'Oratoire, saw a pale-faced, nervous, white-haired man, wearing the same overcoat which he had had at the time of the bankruptcy (for he was as careful of it as a poor [illegible] who economizes his uniform). Sometimes they would stop him in spite of himself, for he was quick-sighted, slinking home, keeping close to the wall like a thief.

"People know how you have behaved, my friend," they would say. "Everybody is sorry to see how hardly you live, you and your wife and daughter."

"Take a little more time about it," others would suggest. "A wound in the purse is not mortal."

"No, but a wound in the soul is deadly indeed," the poor feeble César said one day in answer to Matifat.

At the beginning of the year 1823 the Canal Saint-Martin was decided upon, and land in the Faubourg du Temple fetched fabulous prices. The canal would actually pass through the property once César's, now du Tillet's. The company who had purchased the concession were prepared to pay du Tillet an exorbitant sum for the land if he would put them in possession within a given time, and Popinot's lease was the one obstacle in the way. So du Tillet went to see the druggist in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants.

If Popinot himself regarded du Tillet with indifference, as Césarine's lover he felt an instinctive hatred of the man. He knew nothing of the theft, nor of the disgraceful machinations of the lucky banker, but a voice within him said, "This is a thief who goes unpunished." Popinot had not had the slightest transaction with du Tillet, whose presence was hateful to him, and particularly hateful at that moment when he beheld du Tillet enriched with the spoils of his employer's property, for the building-land at the Madeleine was beginning to command prices which presaged the exorbitant sums which were asked for them in 1827. So when the banker explained the reason of his visit, Popinot looked at him with concentrated indignation.

"I do not mean to refuse outright to surrender my lease, but I must have sixty thousand francs for it, and I will not take a farthing."

"Sixty thousand francs!" cried du Tillet, making as though he would go.

"The lease has fifteen years to run, and it will take another three thousand francs per annum to replace the factory.

So, sixty thousand francs, or we will say no more about it," said Popinot, turning into the shop, whither du Tillet followed him.

The discussion waxed warm, when Mme. Birotteau, hearing her husband's name pronounced, came downstairs, and saw du Tillet for the first time since the famous ball. He, on his side, could not avoid making a startled gesture at the sight of the change wrought in her face; he was frightened at his work, and lowered his eyes.

"This gentleman is receiving three hundred thousand francs for *your* land," said Popinot, addressing Mme. César, "and he declines to pay *us* sixty thousand francs by way of indemnity for *our* lease——"

"Three thousand francs per annum," said du Tillet, laying stress on the words.

"*Three thousand francs!*" Madame César repeated the words quietly and significantly.

Du Tillet turned pale; Popinot looked at Mme. Birotteau. There was a pause and a deep silence, which made the scene still more inexplicable to Anselme.

"Sign your surrender," said du Tillet; "I have had the document drafted by Crottat," and he drew a stamped agreement from a side-pocket. "I will give you a draft on the Bank for sixty thousand francs."

Popinot stared at Mme. César with great and unfeigned astonishment; he thought that he was dreaming. While du Tillet was making out his draft at a desk, Mme. César vanished upstairs again. The druggist and the banker exchanged papers, and du Tillet went out with a frigid bow to Popinot.

"At last!" cried Popinot. "Only a few months now, and I shall have my Césarine, thanks to this queer business," and he watched du Tillet turn into the Rue des Lombards, where his cab was waiting for him. "My dear little wife shall not wear herself to death at her work. What! was a look from Mme. César enough? What is there between her and that brigand? It is a very extraordinary thing."

Popinot sent the draft to be cashed at the Bank, and went up to speak to Mme. Birotteau; but she was not in the counting-house, doubtless she had gone to her room. Anselme and Constance lived like a mother-in-law and son-in-law when these are on good terms with each other, so he went to Constance's room in all the haste natural in a lover who sees happiness within his grasp.

Great was his astonishment to find his mother-in-law (whom he surprised by springing into the room) reading a letter from du Tillet, for Anselme recognized the handwriting at once. The sight of a lighted candle and black phantom scraps of burnt paper on the floor sent a shudder through Popinot, whose long-sighted eyes had involuntarily read the words with which the letter began, "I adore you! You know it, angel of my life, and why——"

"What hold have you on du Tillet to make him conclude such a bargain as this?" he asked, with the jerky laugh of repressed suspicion.

"Let us not talk of it," she said, and he saw that she was painfully agitated.

"Yes," answered Popinot, quite taken aback, "we must talk of the end of your troubles." Anselme swung round on his heels and drummed on the window-pane, staring out into the yard. "Very well," said he to himself, "and suppose that she loved du Tillet, is that any reason why I should not behave like a man of honor?"

"What is it, my boy?" the poor woman asked.

"The net profits on the Cephalic Oil amount to two hundred and forty-two thousand francs, and the half of two hundred and forty-two is one hundred and twenty-one," said Popinot abruptly. "If I deduct from that sum the forty-eight thousand francs already paid to M. Birotteau, there still remain seventy-three thousand; add to it the sixty thousand just paid for the surrender of the lease, and *you* will have one hundred and thirty-three thousand francs."

Mme. César listened in such glad excitement, that Popinot could hear the beating of her heart.

"[illegible] M. Birot[illegible] my part [illegible] renaving [illegible] will [illegible] to a hundred [illegible] thousand francs. [illegible] refuse to give [illegible] twenty [illegible] francs. No [illegible] to [illegible] in-law, [illegible] to pay off the re[illegible] And [illegible] will—be—re[illegible]"

"Rehabilitated!" cried Mme. César, [illegible] before her chair, and, clasping her [illegible] prayer. The [illegible] herself. "Dear Anselme!" she said, "dear boy!" She took his face in her [illegible] him tightly [illegible] "Cé[illegible]" [illegible] "My [illegible] the house where [illegible]

"[illegible]" [illegible] Anselme.

"Yes," [illegible]

"Listen to a [illegible] out of the [illegible] Célestin [illegible] wanted [illegible] it was on one condition. Your [illegible] them. I had my own idea, but I did not think [illegible] would [illegible] Célestin has [illegible] to sublet your old rooms to you; he has not set foot in them, and all the furniture there is yours. I am reserving the second story, so that Césarine and I may live there; she shall never leave you. After we are married, I will spend the day here from [illegible] o'clock in the morning till six in the evening. Then I will buy out M. César's interest in the business for a hundred thousand francs, so that, with his post, you will have ten thousand livres a year. Will you not be happy?"

"Do not say any more, Anselme, or I shall go mad with joy."

Mme. César's angelic bearing, her pure eyes, the innocence

her fair brow, gave the lie so magnificently to the count- thoughts which surged up in the young lover's brain, he made up his mind to slay the chimeras of his fancy. sin was irreconcilable with the life and the sentiments Pillerault's niece.

"My dear adored mother," he began, "a horrible doubt has crossed my mind. If you would see me happy, you will it at rest."

Popinot held out his hand as he spoke, and took possession the letter.

"Unintentionally I read the first words in du Tillet's hand- ting," he said, alarmed at the consternation in her face. The words coincide so oddly with the effect you just produced on the man, who complied at once with my extravagant mands, that anybody would find the explanation which the suggests to me in spite of myself. A glance from you, three words were enough——"

"Stop," said Mme. César, and taking back the letter, she rned it under Anselme's eyes. "I am cruelly punished a trifling fault, my child. And now you must know all, selme. The suspicion attaching to the mother must not her daughter an injury, and besides, I may speak without blush: I could tell my husband this that I am about to tell n. Du Tillet tried to seduce me, my husband was warned once, and Du Tillet was to be dismissed. The very day t my husband was to discharge him du Tillet took three usand francs."

"I suspected it," said Popinot, with all his hatred of the n in his tone.

"Anselme, your future and your happiness required this idence, but it must die in your own breast, as it had died César's and mine. You surely remember the fuss my hus- d made about the mistake in the books. M. Birotteau, no ubt, put three thousand francs into the safe (the price of shawl, which was not given to me for three years), so to avoid ruining the young man by bringing him into a e court. So there you have the explanation of my cry surprise. Alas, my dear boy, I will confess my childish

conduct. Du Tillet had written three love letters to [illegible] letters which showed his nature so plainly that I kept them as a curiosity. I only read them once, but, after all, it was not wise to keep them. When I saw du Tillet, I thought of them, and went up to my room to burn them. When you came in, I was looking at the last one. That is all, my dear."

Anselme knelt and kissed Mme. César's hand. The expression in his eyes drew tears of admiring affection from hers. Constance raised her son-in-law, and clasped him to her heart.

That day was destined to be a day of joy for César. The King's private secretary, M. de Vandenesse, came to the office to speak with him. They went out together into the little courtyard of the Sinking Fund Department.

"M. Birotteau," said the Vicomte, "the story of your struggle to pay your creditors came by chance to the King's knowledge. His Majesty was touched by such unusual conduct; and learning that, from motives of humility, you were not wearing the Order of the Legion of Honor, has sent me to command you to resume it. His Majesty also wishes to assist you to discharge your obligations, and has ordered me to pay this amount to you out of his own privy purse, with regrets that he can do no more for you. Let the matter remain a profound secret, for His Majesty thinks it [illegible] becomes a King to make official proclamation of his good actions," and the private secretary paid over six thousand francs to the employé, who heard these words with indescribable emotions.

Birotteau could only stammer inarticulate thanks. Vandenesse smiled, and waved his hand. César's principles are so rarely seen in practice in Paris, that by degrees his life had won admiration. Joseph Lebas, Popinot the elder, Camusot, Ragon, the Abbé Loraux, the head partner of the firm which employed Césarine, Lourdois, and M. de la Billardière had spoken of it. The scale of opinion had already turned in his favor, and people praised him to the skies.

There goes a man of honor!" The words had reached
ir's ears several times in the street; he heard them with
ensations of an author who hears his name pronounced.
fair renown disgusted du Tillet. César's first thought
ceiving the King's banknotes was of repayment to his
sistant. The good man betook himself to the Rue de la
aussée-d'Antin, and it so fell out that the banker, return-
home from business, met him upon the staircase
Well, my poor Birotteau," said he, in a caressing tone
"Poor?" the other cried proudly. "I am very rich. I shall
my head on the pillow to-night with the satisfaction of
wing that I have paid you."
The words, so full of honesty, put du Tillet for a moment
the rack. Every one respected him, but he had lost his
respect; a voice which could not be stifled cried within
. "This man is heroic!" But he spoke:
"Pay me! What business can you be in?"
Birotteau felt quite sure that du Tillet would not repeat
tory
"I shall never start in business again, sir. No human power
d foresee the thing that befell me. Who knows but that I
t be the victim of another Roguin? But my conduct
been put before the King, his heart has deigned to com-
sonate my struggles, and he has encouraged them by
ing me at once a fairly large sum which "
"Do you want a receipt in full?" du Tillet cut him short.
you paying "
"In full, and interest besides. So I must beg you to come
M. Crottat's office, a step or two away."
"In the presence of a notary!"
"Why, sir, there is nothing to prevent me from thinking
rehabilitation, and a document so authenticated is legal
"
come, let us go," said du Tillet, and he went out with
teau; "it is only a step. But who will find you so much
y?" he went on.
"No one finds it for me," said César. "I am earning it
sweat of my brow."

"You owe an enormous amount to Claparon."

"Alas! yes, that is the heaviest of my debts; I am afraid the effort will be too much for me."

"Oh! you will never be able to pay it all," said du Tillet harshly.

"He is right," thought Birotteau.

He went home again by way of the Rue Saint-Honoré, a piece of inadvertence, for he always went round some other way, that he might not see his shop, nor the windows of his old home. For the first time since his fall, he saw the house where he had spent eighteen happy years, and three months of anguish that effaced those memories.

"I used to count on ending my days there," he said to himself; and he quickened his pace at the sight of a new name on the shop front:

CÉLESTIN CREVEL

Late César Birotteau.

"My eyes dazzle. . . . Is that Césarine?" he cried, thinking that he had seen a golden head at the window.

It was really Césarine whom he saw, and his wife was there, and so was Popinot. The two lovers knew that Birotteau never went past his old home; and it was impossible that they should imagine the great event in the Rue de l'Oratoire, so they had gone to make arrangements for the fête they were planning to give in Birotteau's honor. The strange apparition astonished César so much that he stood stock still.

"There is M. Birotteau looking at his old house," said M. Molineux to a shopkeeper who lived over against the *Queen of Roses.*

"Poor man!" returned Birotteau's old neighbor, "he gave one of the grandest balls there—there were two hundred carriages in the street."

"I went to it; he went bankrupt three months afterwards and I was trustee," said Molineux.

Birotteau fled, his legs trembling beneath him, and reached Pillerault's house.

Pillerault knew what was passing in the Rue des Cinq-Diamants, and it seemed to him that his nephew was scarcely fit to bear the shock of a joy so great as his rehabilitation. He had been a daily witness of César's mental sufferings, knew that Birotteau's own stern doctrine as to bankrupts was always in his thoughts, and that he was living up to the very limit of his strength. Dead honor might have its Easter Day for him; and it was this hope that gave him no respite from pain. Pillerault undertook to prepare César for the good news; so when he came in, his uncle was thinking how to attain his end. César began to tell the news of the interest that the King had taken in him, his joy seemed to Pillerault to be auspicious, and his amazement that Césarine should be at the window at the sign of the *Queen of Roses* afforded an excellent opening.

"Well, César," Pillerault began, "do you know what brought it about? Popinot is impatient to marry Césarine. He will not and ought not to be bound any longer by your extravagant ideas of honor, to spend his youth in eating dry bread and smelling a good dinner. Popinot is determined to pay off your creditors in full."

"He is going to buy his wife."

"Isn't it to his credit that he wants to rehabilitate his father-in-law?"

"But questions might be raised, and besides——"

"And besides," cried Uncle Pillerault in feigned anger, "you may sacrifice yourself if you like, but you have no right to sacrifice your daughter."

A lively discussion began, and Pillerault worked himself up.

"Eh! If Popinot lent you nothing," cried he; "if he had looked upon you as his partner; if he chose to consider the money that he paid over to your creditors for your interest in the Oil as an advance on account of the profits, so that you would not be robbed——"

"It would look as though I had arranged with him to cheat my creditors."

Pillerault pretended to be defeated by this logic. He knew enough of human nature to guess that during the night the good man would argue out the case with himself; and those private reflections of his would accustom him to the idea of rehabilitation.

"But how came my wife and daughter to be in our old house?" he asked at dinner.

"Anselme means to take one of the floors, and he and Césarine will set up housekeeping there. Your wife is on his side. They have had the banns put up without telling you, so as to compel you to give your consent. Popinot says that there will be less merit in marrying Césarine after you are rehabilitated. You accept the King's six thousand francs, and yet you will take nothing from your relatives! Now, for my own part, I am quite justified in giving you a receipt in full; would you refuse it?"

"No," said César. "But it would not hinder me from saving the money to pay you, receipt or no."

"All this is splitting hairs," said Pillerault, "and when honesty is in question, I ought to be allowed to know what is right. What folly were you talking just now? When your creditors are all paid in full, will you still persist that you have cheated them?"

César looked full at Pillerault as he spoke, and it touched the older man to see a bright smile on his nephew's face after three years of dejection.

"You are right," he said, "they would be paid.—But it is like selling my daughter!"

"And I wish to be bought," cried Césarine, who came in with Popinot.

The lovers stealing on tiptoe through the lobby had overheard the words. Mme. Birotteau was just behind them. The three had made a round in a cab, asking all the creditors to meet in Crottat's office that evening; Popinot's lover's logic bore down César's scruples; but he still persisted in calling

nself a debtor, and would have it that he was outflanking e law by a substitution. Conscience yielded to an outburst om Popinot:

"So you mean to kill your daughter, do you?"

"Kill my daughter!" echoed César, bewildered.

"Well, now," said Popinot, "what is there to prevent me om making a deed of gift in your favor of a sum which on y conscience I believe to be yours? Can you refuse?"

"No," said César.

"Good. Then let us go to Alexandre Crottat this evening, so that there shall be no going back upon it, and our marge contract can be decided at the same time."

An application for reinstatement and all the necessary certificates were duly deposited by Derville at the office of the Procureur-Général of the Court of Appeal.

During the month which elapsed between the putting up of the banns and the marriage, and during the progress of the formalities, César lived in a state of constant nervous excitement. He was ill at ease. He feared that he might not live to see the great day when his disabilities should be formally removed. His pulse throbbed unaccountably, he said, and he complained of a dull pain about his heart. He had been exhausted by painful emotion, and this supreme joy was wearing him out. Decrees of rehabilitation are rare in Paris; there is scarcely one in ten years.

There is something indescribably solemn and imposing in the ceremony of justice for those who take society seriously. An institution is to men as they consider it, and is invested with dignity and grandeur by their thoughts. When a nation has ceased, not to feel the religious instinct, but to believe; when primary education relaxes the bonds of union by teaching children a habit of merciless analysis, a nation is dissolved; for the only ties that are left to bind men together and make of them one body are the ignoble ties of material interest, and the dictates of the selfish cult created by egoism carried out. Birotteau, sustained by religion, saw Justice as Justice ought to be regarded among men, as the expression

of society itself; beneath the forms he saw the sovereign will, the laws by which men have agreed to live. If the magistrate is old, feeble, and white-haired, so much the more solemn does his priestly office appear, an office which demands so profound a study of human nature and of things, an office to which the heart is immolated, for of necessity it becomes callous in a guardian of so many palpitating interests.

In these days the men who cannot ascend the staircase of the Court of Appeal in the old Palais de Justice in Paris, without feeling deeply stirred, are growing rare; but Birotteau was one of these men. There are not many who notice the majestic grandeur of that staircase, so magnificently planned to produce an effect. It rises at the further end of the peristyle which adorns the Cour du Palais. The doorway opens on the centre of the gallery which leads from the vast Salle des Pas Perdus at its one end to the Sainte-Chapelle at the other, two monuments which may well dwarf everything about them into insignificance. The Church of St. Louis is in itself one of the grandest buildings in Paris, and there is an indescribable dim atmosphere of romance about it when approached by way of this gallery; while the vast Salle des Pas Perdus is flooded with daylight, and it is hard to forget the memories of the history of France that cling about its walls. So the staircase must have a grandeur of its own if it is not utterly overshadowed by the glories of those two famous buildings. Perhaps there is something to stir the soul at the sight of the place where decrees are executed, beheld through the rich scroll-work of the screen of the Palais. The staircase gives entrance to a vast room, the Salle des Pas Perdus of this court, beyond which lies the Hall of Audience. Imagine the feeling with which Birotteau (always so much impressed by the circumstance of justice) mounted the staircase among a little crowd of his friends—Lebas, at that time President of the Tribunal of Commerce; Camusot, who had acted as registrar; Ragon, his old master; and the Abbé Loraux, his confessor. The presence of the good priest enhanced these earthly honors by a reflection from heaven, which gave them yet more value in César's eyes.

Pillerault, that practical philosopher, had bethought him of the expedient of dwelling upon and exaggerating the joy of the release, so that the actual experience might not overwhelm César. Just as he finished dressing, he found himself surrounded by faithful friends, all anxious for the honor of accompanying him to the bar of the Court. The delight which suffused the good man's soul at the sight of this group raised him to a pitch of happiness necessary for him if he was to endure the alarming ordeal. He found others of his friends standing in the Great Hall of Audience, where a dozen Councillors were sitting.

After the cases had been called, Birotteau's attorney made application in a brief formula. At a sign from the President, the Attorney-General rose to give his opinion. In the name of the Court, the Attorney-General, the public accuser, was about to make demand that the merchant's honor, which had been pledged, should be vindicated; a proceeding unique in law, for a condemned man can only be pardoned. Those who have hearts that feel can imagine Birotteau's feelings when M. de Granville spoke somewhat as follows:

"Gentlemen," said the great lawyer, "on the 16th of January 1820, Birotteau was declared a bankrupt by the Tribunal of Commerce of the Seine. The insolvency was not occasioned by imprudence on the part of the merchant, nor by dishonest speculation, nor any other cause which could stain his honor. We feel that it is necessary to state it publicly—the calamity was brought about by one of those disasters which occur from time to time, to the great affliction of Justice and of the city of Paris. It was reserved for this present century, in which the evil leaven of subverted morals and revolutionary ideas will long ferment, to behold the Parisian notariat depart from the honorable traditions of its past; there have been more cases of insolvency in that body during the last few years than in two preceding centuries under the ancient monarchy. The greed of gold rapidly acquired has seized upon officials, those guardians of the public welfare and intermediary authorities."

Then followed a tirade based on this text, in the course of which M. le Comte de Granville (speaking in character) took occasion to incriminate Liberals, Bonapartists, and all and sundry who were disaffected, as in duty bound. Events have shown that there was good ground for the Councillor's apprehensions.

"The immediate cause of the plaintiff's ruin was the action of a Paris notary, who absconded with the money which Birotteau deposited with him. The sentence passed by the Court in Roguin's case shows how shamefully he had betrayed his client's trust. A *concordat* followed. We will observe, for the honor of the applicant, that the proceedings were characterized by honesty not to be met with in the scandalous failures which daily occur in Paris. Birotteau's creditors, gentlemen, found every trifle that he possessed, down to trinkets and articles of wearing apparel belonging not only to him, but to his wife, who, to swell the assets, gave up all that she had. Birotteau at this juncture showed himself worthy of the respect which he had won by the discharge of his municipal functions; for he was at that time deputy-mayor of the second arrondissement, and had just received the Cross of the Legion of Honor accorded to the devoted Royalist, who shed his blood for the cause on the steps of Saint-Roch in Vendémiaire; and, no less, to the Consular judge, who had won respect by his ability, and popularity by his conciliatory spirit; to the modest municipal officer, who declined the honors of the mayoralty for himself, and put forward the name of another as more worthy—the honorable Baron de la Billardière, one of the noble Vendeans whom he had learned to esteem in evil days."

"He put that better than I did," said César in his uncle's ear.

"The creditors, therefore, receiving sixty per cent of their claims, thanks to the upright merchant and his wife and daughter, who surrendered everything that they possessed, gave expression to their respect in the *concordat*, by which they forewent the remainder of their claims in consideration

of the dividend. The attention of the Court is called to the manner in which this record is worded."—Here the Attorney-General read the *concordat*—"After such expressions of good-will, gentlemen, many a trader would have considered himself free, and would have walked with head erect in public; but so far from considering his liabilities to be discharged, Birotteau would not give way to despair, but made an inward resolution to hasten the coming of a glorious day which here and now dawns for him. Nothing turned him aside from his purpose. Our beloved sovereign gave a post to the man who was wounded at Saint-Roch, and the bankrupt merchant set by the whole of his salary for the benefit of his creditors, for the devotion of his family did not fail him——"

Tears came into Birotteau's eyes as he squeezed his uncle's hand.

"His wife and daughter poured their earnings into the common treasury; they too had embraced Birotteau's loyal purpose. They descended from their position to take a subordinate place. Such sacrifices as these, gentlemen, deserve all honor, for they are the hardest of all. This was the task which Birotteau laid upon himself."

The Attorney read an abbreviated version of the schedule, giving the names of the creditors and the balances due to them.

"Every one of these amounts, gentlemen, has been paid (interest included). The receipts have not been given by notes of hand which demand investigation, but by certificates of payment made in the presence of a notary, documents which do not abuse the good faith of the Court, though, nevertheless, the inquiries required by the law have been duly made. You, therefore, restore to Birotteau not his honor, but the civil and political privileges of which he has been deprived, and in so doing you do justice. Such cases come so seldom before you, that we cannot refrain from giving expression to our admiration of the conduct of the applicant, who has already received the encouragement of august patronage."

With that, he read the formal application. The Court de-

liberated without retiring, and the President rose to pronounce the decree.

"The Court charges me to inform M. Birotteau of the satisfaction with which the decree, granted under such circumstances, is passed.—Call the next case."

Birotteau, already invested with a caftan of honor by the Attorney-General's speech, was struck dumb with joy when he heard these solemn words from the President of the Highest Court of Appeal in France, words which made those who heard them feel that the impassive Themis had a heart. He could not move from his place, he seemed to be glued to the floor, and gazed with bewildered eyes at the Councillors, who seemed to him like angels who had opened the gates which admitted him to life among his fellows. His uncle took him by the arm and drew him away. Then César, who had not obeyed the desire of Louis XVIII., fastened the red ribbon at his buttonhole, like a man in a dream, and went down in triumph with his friends about him to the hackney cab.

"Where are you taking me?" he asked of Joseph Lebas, Pillerault, and Ragon.

"Home."

"No. It is three o'clock; I want to go on 'Change again, now that I have the right."

"To the Exchange," Pillerault gave the order, and looked significantly at Lebas, for there were symptoms which made him uneasy; he feared for Birotteau's reason.

So Birotteau went back on 'Change between his uncle and Joseph Lebas; the two merchants whom every one respected linked their arms in his. The news of his rehabilitation was abroad. Du Tillet was the first to see the three and old Ragon, who followed behind.

"Ah! my dear master! Delighted to hear that you have pulled through your difficulties. Perhaps I contributed to bring about this happy termination by allowing little Popinot to pluck me so easily. I am as glad of your happiness as if it were my own."

"It is the only way open to you," said Pillerault, "for you will never experience it yourself."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked du Tillet.

"A good dig in the ribs, by George," said Lebas, smiling at Pillerault's malicious revenge. He knew nothing of the part that du Tillet had played, but he looked on him as a scoundrel.

Matifat saw César, and immediately all the most respected merchants crowded about the perfumer; he received an ovation on 'Change, the most flattering congratulations and handshakes, which caused here and there some heart-burnings, and here and there a pang of remorse, for fifty out of every hundred present had been insolvent at some time or other.

Gigonnet and Gobseck, chatting in a corner, stared at César as the learned must have stared when the first electric eel was brought for their inspection, and they beheld that strange curiosity, a living Leyden jar.

Then, still breathing the incense of triumph, César went out to the cab, and drove home to his house, where the marriage-contract between his dear child Césarine and the devoted Popinot was to be signed that evening. He laughed nervously, in a way that alarmed his three old friends.

It is one of the mistakes of youth to imagine that every one has the vitality of youth, a defect nearly akin to its best endowment; for youth does not behold life through a pair of spectacles, but through the radiant hues of a reflected glow, and age itself is credited with its own exuberant life. Popinot, like César and Constance, cherished memories of the pomp and splendor of the ball, the strains of Collinet's orchestra had often rung in his ears; he had seen the gay throng of dancers, and tasted the joy so cruelly punished, as Adam and Eve might have thought of the forbidden fruit which banished them from the Garden, and brought Death and Birth into the world, for it seems that the multiplication of the angels is one of the mysteries of the Paradise above.

Popinot, however, could think of that night's festivity not only without remorse, but with joy in his heart, for then it was that Césarine in all her glory had given her promise

to him in his poverty. That evening he had known beyond all doubt that he was loved for himself alone. So when he paid Célestin for the rooms which Grindot had restored, and stipulated that everything should be left untouched; when he had carefully seen that the merest trifles belonging to César and Constance were in their place, he had dreamed of giving a ball there on the day of his wedding. The preparations for the fête had been a work of love. It should be exactly like the previous one, except in the extravagances. Extravagance was over and done with. Still, the dinner was to be served by Chevet, and the guests were almost the same. The Abbé Loraux took the place of the Grand-Chancellor; and Lebas, the President of the Tribunal of Commerce, was to be there. Popinot added M. Camusot's name to the list, as an acknowledgment of the kindness he had shown to Birotteau in so many ways. M. de Vandenesse and M. de Fontaine took the place of M. and Mme. Roguin.

Césarine and Popinot had exercised their discretion in the matter of invitations to the ball. They both shrank from making a festival of their wedding, and had avoided the publicity which jars on pure and tender hearts by giving the dance on the occasion of the signing of the contract. Constance had found the cherry-colored velvet dress in which she had shone for the brief space of a single day; and Césarine had pleased herself by surprising Popinot in the ball-dress of which he had talked times out of mind. So the house was to wear the same air of an enchanted festival, and neither Constance, nor Césarine, nor Anselme thought that there was any danger for César in this joyful surprise. They waited till four o'clock, and grew almost childish in their happiness.

After the hero of the hour had passed through the indescribable emotions of returning to the Exchange, a fresh shock awaited him in the Rue Saint-Honoré. As he came up the stairs, which still looked new, he saw his wife in the cherry-colored velvet dress; he saw Césarine, the Comte de Fontaine, the Vicomte de Vandenesse, the Baron de la Billardière, and the great Vauquelin; a light film spread over his eyes, and

Uncle Pillerault, on whose arm he leaned, felt the shudder that ran through his nephew.

"It is too much for him," the old philosopher said to the enamored Anselme; "he will not stand all the wine which you have poured out for him."

But all hearts beat so high with joy, that César's emotion and tottering steps were ascribed to an intoxication, very natural, as they thought—but not seldom fatal. When he looked round the drawing-room, and saw it filled with guests and women in ball toilets, the sublime rhythm of the *finale* of Beethoven's great symphony beat in his pulses and flooded his brain. That imaginary music streamed in on him like rays of light, sparkling from modulation to modulation; it was to be indeed the *finale* that rang clear and high through the recesses of the tired brain. Overcome by the harmony that swept through him, he laid his hand on his wife's arm, and in tones, rendered almost inaudible by the effort to keep back the flowing blood which filled his mouth:

"I am not well," he said.

Constance, in alarm, led her husband to her room; he was barely able to reach the armchair, into which he sank, exclaiming, "M. Haudry! M. Loraux!"

The Abbé came in, followed by the guests and women in evening dress, who stood in consternation. César in the midst of this brightly-colored throng grasped his confessor's hand, and laid his head on the breast of the wife who knelt beside him. A blood-vessel had been ruptured in the lungs, and the resulting aneurism was stopping his last breath.

"Behold the death of the righteous!" the Abbé Loraux said solemnly, as he stretched his hand towards César with one of those Divine gestures which Rembrandt's inspiration beheld and recorded in his picture of Christ raising Lazarus from the dead.

Christ bade Earth surrender her prey; the good priest sped a soul to heaven, where the martyr to commercial integrity would receive an unfading palm.

THE SECRETS OF A PRINCESS

To Théophile Gautier.

AFTER the disasters of the Revolution of July 1830 had wrecked the fortunes of many a noble family dependent upon the Court, Mme. la Princesse de Cadignan had the address to blame political events for the total ruin due in reality to her own extravagance. The Prince had left France with the Royal Family, but the Princess stayed on in Paris, the very fact of her husband's absence securing her from arrest. He, and he alone, was responsible for a burden of debt which could not be discharged by the sale of all his available property. The creditors had taken over the revenues of the entail, and the affairs of the great family were, in short, in as bad a way as the fortunes of the elder branch of the Bourbons. Things being thus, the Princesse de Cadignan (the lady so celebrated in her day as the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse) made up her mind to live in complete retirement, and tried to make the world forget her. And in the dizzy current of events which swept Paris away, Mme. de Maufrigneuse was soon lost to sight in the Princesse de Cadignan, and became almost a stranger to society; the new actors brought upon the stage by the Revolution of July knew nothing of the metamorphosis.

In France the title of duke takes precedence over all others, even over the title of prince; albeit it is laid down unequivocally in heraldry that titles signify absolutely nothing, and that all the nobly born are perfectly equal. This admirable theory was conscientiously put in practice in former times by the royal house of France; indeed, it is still carried out to the letter at any rate, for kings of France are careful to give their sons the simple title of count. By virtue of the

same system Francis I. signed himself "Francis, Lord of Vanves," thereby eclipsing the splendid array of titles assumed by that pompous monarch, Charles V. Louis XI. had even gone further when he gave his daughter to Pierre de Beaujeu, a simple gentleman. The feudal system was so thoroughly broken up by Louis XIV. that the title of duke in his reign became the supreme and most coveted honor.

Nevertheless, there are two or three families in France, in which the principality consists of great territorial possessions, handed down from former times, and in these it ranks above the duchy. The House of Cadignan is one of these exceptions, the eldest son is the Duc de Maufrigneuse, and the younger brothers are simply Chevaliers de Cadignan.

The Cadignans, like two princes of the House of Rohan in other times, have a right to a chair of state in their own house, and may keep a retinue of pages, gentlemen, in their service. This is a necessary piece of explanation, given partly to anticipate absurd criticisms from persons who know nothing of the matter, partly too as a record of an old stately order of things in a world which is said to be passing away, an order of things which some, who understand it but little, are very eager to abolish.

The Cadignans bear *or five fusils sable conjoined in fesse*, with the motto MEMINI, and a close crown, without supporters or lambrequins. What with the prevalent ignorance of heraldry in these days, and a mighty influx of foreigners to Paris, the title of prince is beginning to enjoy a certain vogue; but it is usually only a courtesy title. There are no real princes in France save those who inherit domains with their name, and are entitled to be addressed as "Your Highness." The disdain felt for the title by the old noblesse, and the reasons which led Louis XIV. to give supremacy to the rank of duke, prevented France from claiming the style of Highness for the few princes in existence (those of Napoleon's creation excepted). This is how the Princes de Cadignan came to rank nominally below other princes on the continent of Europe.

The persons known collectively as the Faubourg Saint-Germain protected the Princess; treating her with a respectful discretion due to a name that will always be honored, to misfortunes which no longer gave rise to talk, and to Mme. de Cadignan's beauty, which was all that remained of her faded glory. The world that she had adorned gave her credit for thus taking the veil, as it were, and entering the cloister in her own house. For her, of all women, such a piece of good taste involved an immense sacrifice; and in France anything great is always so keenly appreciated, that the Princess' retreat gained for her all the ground that she had lost in public opinion while her splendor was at its height. Of her old friends among women, she only saw the Marquise d'Espard; and as yet she was never seen in public on great occasions, or at evening parties. The Princess and the Marquise called upon one another, very early in the morning, and, as it were, in secret; and when the Princess dined with her friend, the Marquise closed her doors to every one else.

Mme. d'Espard's behavior was admirable. She changed her box at the Italiens, coming down from the first tier to a *baignoire* on the ground floor, so that Mme. de Cadignan could come and depart without being seen. Not every woman would have been capable of such a piece of delicacy which deprived her of the pleasure of dragging a former and fallen rival in her train, and posing as her benefactress. Thus enabled to dispense with ruinous toilettes, the Princess went privately in the Marquise's carriage, which in public she would have refused to take. Nobody ever knew why Mme. d'Espard behaved in this way; but her conduct was sublime, involving a whole host of the little sacrifices which seem mere trifles in themselves, but taken as a whole reach giant proportions. In 1832 the snows of three years had covered the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse's adventures, whitening them so effectually that nothing short of a prodigious effort of memory could recall the heavy indictments formerly laid to her charge. Of the queen adored by so many courtiers, of the duchess whose levities might furnish a novelist with several

volumes, there now remained an exquisitely fair woman of thirty-six, who might have passed for thirty in spite of her nineteen-year-old son.

Georges, Duc de Maufrigneuse, beautiful as Antinous, and poor as Job, was certain of a great career; and his mother's first wish was to see him married to a great fortune. Perhaps she meant to choose an heiress for him some day out of Mme. d'Espard's salon, which was supposed to be the first in Paris; perhaps this was the real reason of her intimacy with the Marquise. The Princess, looking forward, saw another five years of retirement before her; five desolate lonely years; but if Georges was to marry well, her conduct must receive the hall-mark of virtue.

The Princess lived in a modest ground-floor flat in a mansion in the Rue de Miromesnil, where relics of bygone splendor had been turned to account. A great lady's elegance still pervaded everything. She had surrounded herself with beautiful things, which told their own story of a life in high spheres. The magnificent miniature of Charles X. above her chimney-piece was painted by Mme. de Mirbel, and bore the legend, "Given by the King," engraved on the frame. The companion picture was a portrait of Madame, who had been so peculiarly gracious to her. The album that shone conspicuous on one of the tables was an almost priceless treasure, which none of the bourgeoises that rule our modern money-making and censorious society would dare to exhibit in public. It was a piece of audacity that paints the Princess' character to admiration. The album was full of portraits, some thirty among them belonging to intimate friends —lovers, the world said. As to numbers, this was a slander; but with regard to some ten of them perhaps, as the Marquise d'Espard said, there was a good, broad foundation for the calumny. However that might be, Maxime de Trailles, de Marsay, Rastignac, the Marquis d'Esgrignon, General de Montriveau, the Marquises de Ronquerolles and d'Ajuda-Pinto, Prince Galathionne, the young Duc de Grandlieu, the young Duc de Rhétoré, the young Vicomte de Sérizy, and

Lucien de Rubempré's beautiful face, had all received most flattering treatment from the brushes of the famous portrait-painters of the day. At this time the Princess had only received two or three of the originals of the portraits, and pleasantly called the book "My Collection of Errors."

Adversity had made a good mother of Mme. la Princesse. Her amusements during the first fifteen years of the Restoration had left her little time to think of her son; but now, when she took refuge in obscurity, this illustrious egoist bethought herself that maternal sentiment pushed to an extreme would win absolution for her. Her past life would be condoned by sentimental people, who will pardon anything to a fond mother, and she loved her son so much the better because she had nothing else left to love. Georges de Maufrigneuse was, for that matter, a son of whom any mother might have been proud. And the Princess had made all kinds of sacrifices for him. Georges had a stable and coach-house, and inhabited three daintily-furnished rooms in the entresol above, which gave upon the street.

His mother stinted herself to keep a horse for him to ride, a cab-horse, and a diminutive servant. The Duke's tiger had a hard time of it! "Toby," once in the service of "the late Beaudenord"—for in this jocular manner young men of fashion were wont to allude to that ruined dandy—Toby, to repeat, now turned twenty-five years of age, and still supposed to be fourteen, must groom the horses, clean the cab or the tilbury, go out with his master, keep his rooms in order, and be on hand in the Princess' antechamber to admit visitors, if by any chance a visitor called on her.

When you considered the part that the beautiful Duchesse de Maufrigneuse had played under the Restoration; how she had been one of the queens of Paris, a radiant queen, leading a life so luxurious that even the wealthiest women of fashion in London might have taken lessons of her; it was something indescribably touching to see her in that mere nutshell of a place in the Rue de Miromesnil, only a few doors away from the huge hôtel de Cadignan, which nobody was rich enough

to live in, so that the speculative builder's hammer brought it down. The woman for whom thirty servants were scarce sufficient, the mistress of the finest salons and the prettiest *petits appartements* in which she entertained so splendidly, was now living in a suite of five rooms—an antechamber, a dining-room, a drawing-room, a bedroom, and dressing-room—with a couple of women servants for her whole establishment.

"Ah! she is an admirable mother," that shrewd woman the Marquise d'Espard would remark, "and admirable without overdoing it. She is happy. Nobody would have believed that such a frivolous woman would be capable of taking a resolution and following it up so persistently as she does. And our good Archbishop has encouraged her, he is goodness itself to her, he has just persuaded the dowager Comtesse de Cinq-Cygne to call upon her."

In any case, let us own that no one but a queen can abdicate, and descend nobly from the lofty elevation which is never utterly lost to her. It is only those who are conscious that they are nothing in themselves that will waste regrets on their decline, and pity themselves, and turn to a past that will never return for them. They know instinctively that success will not come twice. The Princess was forced to do without the rare flowers with which she had been wont to surround herself, a setting that enhanced her beauty, for no one could fail to compare her to a flower. Wherefore she had chosen her ground-floor flat with care, so as to enjoy a pretty little garden with flowering trees and a green grass-plot to brighten her quiet rooms all through the year.

Her annual income possibly amounted to twelve thousand francs or thereabouts, but even that modest sum was made up partly by an allowance from the old Duchesse de Navarreins (the young Duke's paternal aunt), partly by contributions from the Duchesse d'Uxelles, who was living on her estate in the country, and saving as none but dowager-duchesses can save: Harpagon was a mere tyro in comparison.

The Prince de Cadignan lived abroad, always at the orders

of his exiled masters. He shared their adversity, serving them with a devotion as disinterested, and perhaps rather more intelligent than that of most other adherents of fallen royalty. His position was even now a protection to his wife in Paris. In such obscurity did the Princess live, and so little did her destitution arouse the suspicions of the Government, that a certain Marshal, to whom France owes an African province, used to meet Legitimist leaders at her house and hold counsel with them while Madame was making the attempt in La Vendée.

Foreseeing the approaching bankruptcy of love, and the drawing nigh of that fortieth year beyond which there lies so little for a woman, the Princess launched forth into the realms of politics and philosophy. She took to reading!—she who for the last sixteen years had shown the utmost abhorrence of anything serious! Literature and politics to-day take the place of devoutness as the last refuge of feminine affectation. It was said in fashionable circles that Diane meant to write a book. During this transition period, when the beautiful woman of other days was preparing to fade into a woman of intellect, until such time as she should fade away for good, Diane made of the reception at her house a privilege in the highest degree flattering for the persons thus favored. Under cover of these occupations she contrived to hoodwink de Marsay, one of her early lovers, and now the most influential member of the Government of the Citizen King. Several times she received visits from the Prime Minister in the evening while the Legitimist leaders and the Marshal were actually assembled in her bedroom, discussing plans for winning back the kingdom, and forgetting in their deliberations that the kingdom was not to be won without the help of ideas—the one means of success overlooked by them. It was a pretty woman's revenge thus to inveigle a prime minister and use him as a screen for a conspiracy against his own government; the Princess wrote Madame the sprightliest account of an adventure worthy of the best days of the Fronde.

The young Duc de Maufrigneuse went to La Vendée, and

contrived to come back again quietly and without committing himself, but not until he had shared Madame's perils. When all seemed lost, Madame sent him back, unfortunately perhaps, for a young man's impassioned vigilance might possibly have foiled treachery.

Great as Mme. de Maufrigneuse's transgressions might have been in the eyes of the middle-class matron, her son's behavior blotted them all out for the aristocratic world. It was something great and noble surely to risk the life of an only son and the heir to an historic name in this way. There are persons, reputed clever, who redeem the faults of private life by political services, and *vice versâ*. But the Princesse de Cadignan had acted without calculation of any kind. Perhaps there is never calculation on the part of those who so conduct their lives; and circumstances account for a good half of many seeming inconsistencies.

On one of the first fine days in May 1833, the Marquise d'Espard and the Princess were taking a turn, they could scarcely be said to be taking a walk, along the one garden path beside the grass plot. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, the sun was taking leave of the garden for the day, but the air was warm with heat reflected from the walls, and the air was full of the scent of flowers brought by the Marquise.

"We shall lose de Marsay soon," Mme. d'Espard was saying, "and with him goes your last hope of fortune for the Duc de Maufrigneuse; since you played such a successful trick on that great politician, his affection for you has sensibly increased."

"My son shall never come to terms with the younger branch, even if he must starve first and I should have to work for him," returned the Princess. "But Berthe de Cinq-Cygne has no aversion for him."

"The younger generation is not bound in the same way as the older——"

"Let us say nothing about that. If I fail to tame the Mar-

quise de Cinq-Cygne, it will be quite bad enough to be forced to marry my son to some blacksmith's daughter, as young d'Esgrignon did."

"Did you love him?" asked the Marquise.

"No," the Princess answered gravely, "d'Esgrignon's naiveté was only a kind of provincial's callowness, as I found out a little too late, or too soon, if you prefer it."

"And de Marsay?"

"De Marsay played with me as if I were a doll. I was almost a girl. We never love the men who take the office of tutor upon themselves; they grate overmuch on our little susceptibilities."

"And that wretched boy who hanged himself?"

"Lucien? An Antinous and a great poet. I worshiped him in all conscience, and I might have been happy. But he was in love with a girl of the town; and I gave him up to Mme. de Sérizy. . . . If he had cared to love me, should I have given him up?"

"What an odd thing, that you should come into collision with an Esther!"

"She was handsomer than I," said the Princess.—"Very soon I shall have spent three years in complete solitude," she went on after a pause. "Well, there has been nothing painful in the quiet. To you, and you only, I will venture to say that I have been happy. Adoration palled upon me; I was jaded without enjoyment; the surface impressions never went deeper into my heart. All the men that I had known were petty, mean, and superficial, I thought; not one of them did anything in the least unexpected; they had neither innocence, nor greatness, nor delicacy. I should have liked to find some one of whom I could stand in awe."

"Then, is it with you as it is with me, my dear? Have you tried to love and never found love?"

"Never," broke in the Princess, laying a hand on her friend's arm. The two women went across to a rustic bench under a mass of jessamine now flowering for the second time. Both had spoken words full of solemn import for women at their age.

"Like you," resumed the Princess, "I have been more loved, perhaps, than other women; but through so many adventures, I feel that I have never known happiness. I have done many reckless things, but always with an end in view, and that end receded as I advanced. My heart has grown old with an innocence unfathomed in it. Yes, a credulous first love lies unawakened beneath all the experience, and I feel too that I am young and fair, in spite of so much weariness, so many blighting influences. We may love, yet not be happy; we may be happy when we do not love; but to love and to be happy both, to know the two boundless joys of human experience—this is a miracle, and the miracle has not been worked for me."

"Nor for me," said Mme. d'Espard.

"A dreadful regret haunts me in my retreat; I have found pastimes, but I have not loved."

"What an incredible secret!"

"Ah! my dear, these are secrets that we can only confide to each other; nobody in Paris would believe us."

"And if we had not both passed our thirty-sixth year, perhaps we might not make these admissions."

"No. While we are young, we are stupidly fatuous on some points," assented the Princess. "Sometimes we behave like the poverty-stricken youths that play with a toothpick to make others believe that they have dined well."

"After all, here we are," Mme. d'Espard said, with bewitching grace, and a charming gesture as of innocence grown wise; "here we are, and there is still enough life in us, it seems to me, for a return game."

"When you told me the other day that Béatrix had gone off with Conti, I thought about it all night long," said the Princess, after a pause. "A woman must be very happy indeed to sacrifice her position and her future, and to give up the world for ever like that."

"She is a little fool," Mme. d'Espard returned gravely. "Mlle. des Touches was only too delighted to be rid of Conti. Béatrix could not see that it was a strong proof that there was

nothing in Conti when a clever woman gave him up without making a defence of her so-called happiness for a single moment."

"Then is she going to be unhappy?"

"She is unhappy now. What was the good of leaving her husband? What is it but an admission of weakness in a wife?"

"Then, do you think that Mme. de Rochefide's motive was not a desire to experience a complete love, that bliss of loving and being loved which for us both is still a dream?"

"No. She aped Mme. de Beauséant and Mme. de Langeais, who, between ourselves, would have been as great figures as La Vallière, or the Montespan, or Diane de Poitiers, or the Duchesses d'Étampes or de Chateauroux, in any age less commonplace than ours."

"Oh, with the king omitted, yes, my dear. Ah! if I could only call up those women, and ask them if——"

"But there is no necessity to call up the dead," broke in the Marquise; "we know living women who are happy. A score of times I have begun intimate talk about this kind of thing with the Comtesse de Montcornet. For fifteen years she has been the happiest woman under the sun with that little Émile Blondet. Not an infidelity, not a thought from another; they are still as they were at the first. But somebody always comes to disturb us at the most interesting point. Then there is Rastignac and Mme. de Nucingen, and your cousin Mme. de Camps and that Octave of hers; there is a secret in these long attachments; they know something, dear, that we neither of us know. The world does us the exceeding honor to take us for *rouées* worthy of the Court of the Regency, and we are as innocent as two little boarding-school misses."

"I should be glad to have even that innocence," the Princess exclaimed mockingly; "ours is worse, there is something humiliating in it. There is no help for it! We will offer up our mortification to God in expiation of our fruitless quest of love; for it is scarcely likely, dear, that in our Martin's sum-

mer we shall find the glorious flower that did not bloom for us in May and June."

"That is not the question," rejoined the Marquise after a pause, filled by meditative retrospect. "We are still handsome enough to inspire love, but we shall never convince any one of our innocence and virtue."

"If it were a falsehood, it should soon be garnished with commentaries, served up with the pretty art that makes a lie credible, and swallowed down like delicious fruit. But to make a truth credible!—Ah! the greatest men have perished in that attempt," added the Princess, with a subtle smile that Leonardo's brush alone could render.

"Fools can sometimes love," said the Marquise.

"Yes; but not even fools are simple enough to believe this," pointed out the Princess.

"You are right," the Marquise said, laughing. "We ought not to look to a fool or a man of talent for the solution of the problem. There is nothing for it but genius. In genius alone do you find a child's trustfulness, the religion of love, and a willingness to be blindfolded. Look at Canalis and the Duchesse de Chaulieu. If you and I ever came across men of genius, they were too remote from our lives, and too busy; we were too frivolous, too much carried away and taken up with other things."

"Ah! and yet I should not like to leave this world without knowing the joy of love to the full," exclaimed the Princess.

"It is nothing to inspire love," said Mme. d'Espard; "it is a question of feeling it. I see many women that are only pegs on which to hang a passion, and not at once its cause and effect."

"The last passion that I inspired was something sacred and noble," said the Princess; "a future lay before it. Chance, for this once, sent me the man of genius, our due; the due so difficult to come by, for there are more pretty women than men of genius. But the devil was in it."

"Do tell me about it, dear; this is quite new to me."

"I only discovered his romantic passion in the winter of

1829. Every Friday at the Opéra I used to see a man of thirty or thereabouts sitting in the same place in the orchestra; he used to look at me with eyes of fire, saddened at times by the thought of the distance between us and the impossibility of success."

"Poor fellow, we grow very stupid when we are in love," said the Marquise. The Princess smiled at the friendly epigram.

"He used to slip out into the corridor between the acts," she went on. "Once or twice, to see me or to be seen, he pressed his face against the pane of glass in the next box. If people came to my box, I used to see him glued in the doorway to steal a glance. He knew every one in my set by sight at last. He used to follow them to my box, for the sake of having the door left ajar. Poor fellow, he must have found out who I was very soon, for he knew M. de Maufrigneuse and my father-in-law by sight. Afterwards I used to see my mysterious stranger at the Italiens, sitting in a stall just opposite, so that he could look up at me in unfeigned ecstasy. It was pretty to see it. After the Opéra or the Bouffons, I used to see him planted on his two feet in the crush. People elbowed him, he stood firm. The light died out of his eyes when he saw me leaning on the arm of some one in favor. As for anything else, not a word, not a letter, not a sign. This was in good taste, you must admit. Sometimes in the morning, when I came back to my house, I would find him again, sitting on a stone by the gateway. This love-stricken man had very fine eyes, a long, thick fan-shaped beard, a royale, and a moustache and whiskers; you could see nothing of his face but the pale skin over the cheek bones and a noble forehead. It was a truly antique head.

"The Prince, as you know," she continued, "defended the Tuileries on the side of the Quais in July. He came to Saint-Cloud the evening that all was lost. 'I was all but killed, dear, at four o'clock,' he said. 'One of the insurgents had leveled his gun at me, when the leader of the attack, a young man with a long beard whom I have seen at the Italiens, I think,

struck down the barrel.' The shot hit somebody else, a quarter-master, I believe, two paces away from my husband. So it was plain that the young fellow was a Republican.

"In 1831 when I came to live here I saw him leaning against the house wall. He seemed to rejoice over my calamities; perhaps he thought that they brought us nearer together. But I never saw him again after the Saint-Merri affair; he was killed that day. The day before General Lamarque's funeral I walked out with my son, and our Republican went with us, sometimes behind, sometimes in front, from the Madeleine to the Passage des Panoramas where I was going."

"Is that all?" asked the Marquise.

"All," returned the Princess. "Oh yes; the morning after Saint-Merri was taken a boy out of the street came and must speak to me; he gave me a letter written on cheap paper, and signed with the stranger's name."

"Let me see it," said the Marquise.

"No, dear. The love in that man's heart was something so great and sacred that I cannot betray his confidence. It stirs my heart to think of that short terrible letter, and the dead writer moves me more than any of the living men that I have singled out. He haunts me."

"Tell me his name?"

"Oh, quite a common one—Michel Chrestien."

"You did well to tell me of it," Mme. d'Espard answered quickly; "I have often heard of him. Michel Chrestien was a friend of a well-known writer whom you have already wished to see—that Daniel d'Arthez who comes to my house once or twice in a winter. This Chrestien, who died, as a matter of fact, at Saint-Merri, did not lack friends. I have heard it said that he was one of those great politicians who, like de Marsay, need nothing but a turn of the wheel of chance to be on a sudden all that they ought to be."

"Then it is better that he should be dead," said the Princess, hiding her thoughts beneath a melancholy expression.

"Do you care to meet d'Arthez some evening at my house?"

asked the Marquise. "You could talk with him of your lost."

"Very willingly, dear."

Some days after this conversation, Blondet and Rastignac, knowing d'Arthez, promised Mme. d'Espard that he should see with her. The promise would scarcely have been prudent if the Princess' name had not been mentioned, but the great man of letters could not be indifferent to the opportunity of an introduction to her.

Daniel d'Arthez is one of the very few men of our day who combine great gifts with a great nature. He had at this time won, not all the popularity that his work deserved, but a respectful esteem to which the chosen few could add nothing. His reputation certainly would increase, but in the eyes of connoisseurs he had practically reached his full development. Some writers find their true level soon or late, and once for all, and d'Arthez was one of them. Poor, and of good family, he had rightly guessed the spirit of the age, and trusted not to his ancestor's name, but the name won by himself. For many years he fought his battle in the arena of Paris, to the annoyance of a rich uncle, who left the obscure writer to languish in the direst poverty. Afterwards, when his nephew became famous, he left him all his money, a piece of inconsistency to be laid to the score of vanity. The sudden transition from poverty to wealth made no change whatever in Daniel d'Arthez's way of life. He continued his work with simplicity worthy of ancient times, and laid new burdens upon himself by accepting a seat in the Chamber of Deputies, on the benches to the Right.

Since his name became known in the world he had occasionally gone into society. An old friend of his, the great actor Horace Bianchon, had introduced him to the Baron de Rastignac, an under-secretary of state, and a friend of de Marsay's. These were the two politicians who nobly enough gave Michel Chrestien's friends permission to look for his dead body in the cloisters of Saint-Merri, and to bury the Re-

publican with due honors. Gratitude for a service which contrasted strongly with the rigor used by the administration at a time when party spirit ran so high, formed a bond, as it were, between d'Arthez and Rastignac, a bond which the under-secretary of state and the illustrious minister were too adroit not to turn to account. Several of Michel Chrestien's friends held opposite opinions in politics; these had been won over and attached to the new government. One of them, Léon Giraud, first received the appointment of Master of Requests, and afterwards became a Councillor of State.

Daniel d'Arthez's life was entirely devoted to his work. He saw society by glimpses only; it was a sort of dream for him. His house was a convent. He led the life of a Benedictine, with a Benedictine's sober rule, a Benedictine's regularity of occupation. His friends knew that he had always dreaded the accident of a woman's entry into his life, he had studied woman too well not to fear her; and by dint of much study he knew less of his subject, much as your profound tactician is always beaten under unforeseen conditions when scientific axioms will not apply. He turned the face of an experienced observer upon the world while he was still at heart a completely unsophisticated boy. The seeming paradox is quite intelligible to any one who can appreciate the immense distance set between faculties and sentiments—for the former proceed from the brain, the latter from the heart. A man may be great, and yet be a villain, and a fool may rise to sublime heights of love. D'Arthez was one of the richly endowed beings in whom a keen brain and a wide range of intellectual gifts have not excluded a capacity for deep and noble feeling. By a rare privilege he was both a doer and a thinker. His private life was noble and pure. Carefully as he had shunned love hitherto, he was learned in love; he knew beforehand how great an ascendency passion would gain over him. But poverty and cold, and the heavy strain of the preparation of the solid groundwork of his brilliant after-achievements, had acted marvelously as a preservative. Then his circumstances grew easier, and he formed a commonplace and utterly in-

comprehensible connection; the woman certainly was good-looking enough, but without manners or education, and socially his inferior. She was kept carefully out of sight.

Michel Chrestien maintained that men of genius possess the power of transforming the most massive women into sylphs; for them the silliest of the sex have sense and wit, and the peasant-girl is a marquise; the more accomplished the woman, the more (according to Chrestien) she loses in their eyes, because she leaves less to the imagination. He also held that love (a purely physical craving for lower natures) becomes for the higher, the greatest achievement of the soul of man; the closest and strongest of all ties that bind two human creatures to each other. By way of justifying d'Arthez, he instanced Raphael and the Fornarina. (He might have taken himself as a model in that kind, since he saw an angel in the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse.) But d'Arthez's strange fancy was explicable in many ways. Perhaps at the outset he lost all hope of finding a woman to correspond to the exquisite visionary ideal, the fond dream of every intelligent man; perhaps his heart was too fastidiously sensitive, too delicate to surrender to a woman of the world; perhaps he preferred to do as nature bade while keeping his illusions and cultivating his ideal; or had he put love far from him as something incompatible with work, with the regularity of a cloistered life, in which passion might have worked confusion?

For some months past Blondet and Rastignac had rallied him on this score, reproaching him with knowing nothing of the world nor of women. To hear them talk, his works were numerous enough and advanced enough to permit of some diversion; he had a fine fortune, yet he lived like a student; he had had no pleasure from his fame or his wealth; he knew nothing of the exquisite delights of the noble and delicate passion that a high-born, high-bred woman can inspire and feel. Was it not unworthy in him to know love only in its gross material aspects? Love reduced to the thing that nature made it was, in their eyes, the most besotted folly. It was the glory of civilization that it had created Woman, when

nature stopped short at the female; nature cared for nothing but the perpetuation of the species, whereas civilization invented the perpetuation of desire; and, in short, discovered love, the fairest of man's religions. D'Arthez knew nothing of charming subtleties of language; nothing of proofs of affection continually given by the brain and soul; nothing of desire ennobled by expression; nothing of the divine form that a high-bred woman lends to the grossest materialism. D'Arthez might know women, but he knew nothing of the divinity. A prodigious deal of art, a fair presentment of body and soul, was indispensable in a woman, if love was worthy to be called love. In short, the tempters vaunted that delicious corruption of the imagination which constitutes a Parisienne's coquetry; they pitied d'Arthez because he lived on plain and wholesome fare, and had not tasted luxuries prepared with the Parisienne's skill in these high culinary arts, and whetted his curiosity. At length Dr. Bianchon, recipient of d'Arthez's confidences, knew that this curiosity was aroused. The connection formed by the great man of letters with a commonplace woman, far from growing more agreeable with use and wont, had become intolerable to him; but the excessive shyness that seizes upon solitary men was holding him back.

"What?" said Rastignac, "when a man bears per bend *gules* and *or*, a besant and a torteau counterchanged, why does he not allow the old Picard scutcheon to shine on his carriage? You have thirty thousand livres a year and all that you make by your pen; you have made good your motto—ARS THES*aurusque virtus*, an old punning device such as our ancestors loved—yet you will not air it in the Bois de Boulogne! Good qualities ought not to hide themselves in this age."

"If you read your work over to that fat Laforêt-like creature who solaces your existence, I would forgive you for keeping her," put in Blondet. "But, my dear fellow, if you live on dry bread materially speaking, mentally you have not so much as a crust."

These friendly skirmishes between Daniel and his friends

been going on for some months before Mme. d'Espard
l Rastignac and Blondet to induce d'Arthez to dine with
saying as she did so that the Princesse de Cadignan was
remely anxious to make the famous writer's acquaintance.
e are women for whom curiosities of this kind have all
ttraction that magic-lantern pictures possess for chil-
; but the pleasure for the eyes is poor enough at the best,
fraught with disenchantment. The more interesting a
man seems at a distance, the less he answers expecta-
a nearer view; the more brilliant he was imagined to
duller the figure that he subsequently cuts. And it
added, parenthetically, that disappointed curiosity is
be unjust. D'Arthez was not to be deluded by Ras-
or Blondet, but they told him laughingly that here was
alluring opportunity of rubbing the rust off his heart,
covering something of the supreme felicity to be gained
gh the love of a Parisian great lady. The Princess was
ely smitten with him; there was nothing to fear; he had
ng to gain from the interview; he could not possibly
d from the pedestal on which Mme. de Cadignan had
him. Neither Blondet nor Rastignac saw any harm
liting the Princess with this love-affair; her past had
ed so many anecdotes that she could surely bear the
of the slander. For d'Arthez's benefit, they proceeded
ate the adventures of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse
ning with Her Grace's first flirtations with de Mar-
y told of her subsequent escapades with d'Ajuda-Pinto
she took from his wife, and so avenged Mme. de Beau-
and of her third *liaison* with young d'Esgrignon, who
th her to Italy, and got himself into an ugly scrape
count. Then they told how [illegible] a certain well-
mbassador had made her; how happy she had been
Russian general; how she had [illegible] since then as
to two Ministers of Foreign Affairs and so forth and
D'Arthez told them that he had heard more about
they could tell him; their poor friend Michel [illegible]
orshiped her in his secret heart for four years, and
ost his wits for her.

"I often used to go with him to the Italiens or the Opéra," Daniel said. "He and I used to rush along the streets to keep up with her horses, while he gazed at the Princess through the windows of her brougham. The Prince de Cadignan owed his life to that love affair; a street-boy was going to fire at him when Michel stopped him."

"Well, well, you will find a subject ready made," smiled Blondet. "Just the woman you want; she will only be cruel through delicacy; she will initiate you into the mysteries of refined luxury in the most gracious way; but take care! She has run through many a fortune. The fair Diane is a spendthrift of the order that costs not a centime, but for whom men spend millions. Give yourself body and soul if you will, but keep a hold of your purse, like the old man in Girodet's picture of the *Deluge*."

This conversation invested the Princess with the grace of a queen, the corruption of a diplomatist, the mystery of an initiation, the depth of an abyss, and the danger of a siren. D'Arthez's ingenious friends, being quite unable to foresee the results of their hoax, ended by making Diane d'Uxelles the most portentous Parisienne, the cleverest coquette, the most bewildering courtesan in the world. They were right; and yet the woman so lightly spoken of was sacred and divine for d'Arthez. There was no need to work upon his curiosity. He agreed to meet her at the first asking, and that was all his friends wanted of him.

Mme. d'Espard went to the Princess as soon as the invitation was accepted.

"Do you feel that you are in good looks and good form for coquetry, dear?" she asked. "Come and dine with me in a few days' time, and I will serve you up d'Arthez. Our man of genius is the shyest of the shy; he is afraid of women; he has never been in love. Here is a subject for you. He is extremely clever, and so simple that he disarms suspicion and puts you at a disadvantage. His perspicacity is altogether of the retrospective kind; it acts after the event, and throws out all your calculations. You may take him in to-day; to-morrow he is not to be duped by anything."

"Ah! if I were only thirty years old, I would have some [illegible]" said the Princess. "The one thing wanting in my life [illegible] has been a man of genius to outwit. I have always [illegible]rtners, never an adversary. Love was a game, not a [illegible]."

[illegible]dmit that I am very generous, dear Princess; for, after [illegible]well-regulated charity——"

[illegible] women looked laughingly into each other's faces, and [illegible] met with a friendly pressure. Surely both of [illegible]st have been in possession of important secrets! They [illegible]d not take account of a man or a service to render; [illegible] sincere and lasting friendship between two women is [illegible]e cemented by petty crimes. You may see two of [illegible]ear friends, each of them quite able to kill the other [illegible] poisoned dagger in her hand; and a touching picture [illegible]rmony they present—till the moment comes when one of [illegible] chances to let her weapon drop.

[illegible] a week's time, therefore, the Marquise gave one of her [illegible] evening parties, her *petits jours*, when a few intimate [illegible]nds were invited by word of mouth, and the hostess shut [illegible] door to other visitors. Five people were asked to dinner: [illegible] Blondet and Mme. de Montcornet, Daniel d'Arthez, [illegible]gnac and the Princesse de Cadignan—three men and, [illegible]ding the mistress of the house, three women. Never did [illegible] permit of more skilful prearrangement than on this occasion of d'Arthez's introduction to Mme. de Cadignan.

Even at this day the Princess is supposed to be one of the best-dressed women in Paris, and for women dress is the first [illegible]. She wore a blue velvet gown with large white hanging sleeves. The corselet bodice was cut low at the throat; [illegible] a sort of chemisette of slightly drawn tulle with a blue [illegible]ler—such as you may see in some of Raphael's portraits—[illegible]ed her shoulders, leaving only about four fingers' breadth [illegible]er neck quite bare. A few sprays of white heather, cleverly [illegible]nged by her maid, adorned the fair, rippling hair for which Diane had been famous. In truth, at this moment she looked scarcely five-and-twenty. Four years of solitude and

repose had restored brilliancy to her complexion; and there are moments, surely, when a woman looks more beautiful for the desire to please; the will counts for something in the changes that pass over a face. If persons of sanguine or melancholic temperament turn sallow, and the lymphatic grow livid under the influence of violent emotion, surely it must be conceded that desire and hope and joy are great beautifiers of the complexion; they glow in brilliant light from the eyes, kindling beauty in a face with a fresh brightness like that of a sunny morning. The white fairness for which the Princess was so famous had taken on the rich coloring of mature and majestic womanhood. At this period of her life, reflection and serious thought had left their impression upon her; the dreamy, very noble forehead seemed wonderfully in harmony with the slow queenly gaze of her blue eyes. No physiognomist, however skilled, could have imagined that calculation and decision lay beneath those preternaturally delicate features. Some women's faces baffle science by their repose and fineness, and leave observation at fault; the opportunity of studying them while the passions speak is hard to come by; when the passions have spoken it is too late; by that time a woman is old, she does not care to dissimulate.

The Princess was just such an inscrutable feminine mystery. Whatever she chose to be she could be. She was playful, childlike, distractingly innocent; or subtle, serious, and disquietingly profound. When she came to the Marquise's, she meant to be a simple, sweet woman, who had known life only in its deceptions; a soulful, much-slandered, but resigned [illegible] cruelly-used angel, in short.

[illegible] came early, so as to take her place beside Mme. d'Es[illegible] on the settee by the fireside. She would be seen as she [illegible]t to be seen; she would arrange her attitude with an art [illegible]ncealed by an exquisite ease; her pose should be of the elaborated and studied kind which brings out all the beauty of the curving line that begins at the foot, rises gracefully to the hips, and continues through wonderful sinuous contours to the shoulder, outlining the whole length of the body. Nudity

would be less dangerous than draperies so artfully arranged to cover and reveal every line. With a subtlety beyond the reach of many women, Diane had brought her son with her. For a moment Mme. d'Espard beheld the Duc de Maufrigneuse with blank amazement, then her eyes showed that she comprehended the situation. She grasped the Princess' hand with, "I understand! D'Arthez is to be made to accept all the difficulties at the outset, so that you will have nothing to overcome afterwards."

The Comtesse de Montcornet came with Blondet, Rastignac brought d'Arthez. The Princess paid the great man none of the compliments with which ordinary people are lavish on such occasions; but in her advances there was a certain graciousness and deference which could scarcely have been exceeded for any one. Just so, no doubt, she had been with the King of France and the Princes. She seemed pleased to see the great man of letters, and glad to have sought him out. People of taste (and the Princess' taste was excellent) are known by their manner as listeners; by an unfeigned interest and urbanity, which is to politeness what practice is to good doctrine. Her attentive way of listening when d'Arthez spoke was a thousand times more flattering than the most highly-seasoned compliments. The introduction was made by the Marquise quite simply, and with regard to the dues of rank.

At dinner, so far from adopting the affectations which some women permit themselves with regard to food, the Princess ate with a very good appetite; she made a point of allowing the natural woman to appear without airs of any kind. D'Arthez sat next to her, and between the courses she entered upon a *tête-à-tête* with him under cover of the general conversation.

"My reason for procuring myself the pleasure of a meeting with you, monsieur," she said, "was a wish to hear something of an unfortunate friend of yours who died for a cause dearer than ours. I lay under great obligations to him, but it was out of my power to acknowledge or to requite his ser-

vices. The Prince de Cadignan shares my regrets. I have heard that you were one of the poor fellow's most intimate friends, and that disinterested staunch friendship between you gives me a certain claim to your acquaintance; so you will not think it strange that I should wish to hear all that you could tell me of one so dear to you. I am attached to the exiled family, and of course hold monarchical opinions; but I am not of the number of those who think that it is impossible for a Republican to be noble at heart. A monarchy and a republic are the only forms of government which do not stifle nobility of sentiment."

"Michel Chrestien was sublime, madame," Daniel answered with an unsteady voice. "I do not know of a greater man among the heroes of old times. You must not think that he was one of the narrow Republicans who want the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety re-established with its pretty ways. No, Michel used to dream of European Federation on the Swiss model. Set aside the magnificent monarchical system which, in my opinion, is peculiarly suited to our country; and let us admit that Michel's project would mean the abolition of war in the old world, and a Europe constituted afresh on a very different basis from that of ancient conquest, modified subsequently by the feudal system. On this showing the Republicans most nearly approached his theories; and for that reason he fought with them in July and at Saint-Merri. In politics we were diametrically opposed, but none the less we were the closest friends."

"It is the finest possible testimony to both your characters," Mme. de Cadignan said timidly.

"During the last four years of his life he told me of his love for you. No one else knew about it," continued d'Arthez. "We had been like brothers; but that confidence bound us to each other even more closely than before. He alone, madame, would have loved you as you deserve to be loved. Many a wetting I have had, as he and I accompanied your carriage home, running to keep up with the horses, so as not to miss a glimpse of your face—to admire you——"

"Why, monsieur, I shall soon be bound to make compensation——"

"Why is not Michel here?" returned Daniel in a melancholy voice.

"Perhaps he might not have loved me for long," began the Princess with a sorrowful shake of the head. "Republicans are even more absolute in their ideas than we Absolutists who sin through indulgence. He would dream of me as a perfect woman no doubt; he would have been cruelly undeceived. We women are persecuted with slander; and, unlike you literary men, we cannot meet calumny and fight it down by our fame and our achievements. People take us, not for the women we are, but simply as others make us out to be. Others would very soon hide the real unknown self that there is in me by holding up a sham portrait of an imaginary woman, the true Mme. de Maufrigneuse in the eyes of the world. He would think me unworthy of the noble love he bore me, he would think I could not understand." Again the Princess shook her head with its coronet of heather among the bright gold curls. There was something sublime in the movement; it expressed sorrowful misgivings and hidden griefs that could not be uttered. Daniel understood all that it meant. He looked at her with quick sympathy in his eyes.

"Still," she said, "when I saw him again one day, a long while after the Revolution of July, I almost gave way to a wish that came over me to grasp him by the hand, then and there before every one, in the peristyle of the Théâtre Italien, and to give him my bouquet. And then—I thought that such a demonstration of gratitude would be sure to be misconstrued, like so many generous acts that people call 'Mme. de Maufrigneuse's follies'; it will never be in my power to explain them; nobody save God and my son will ever know me as I really am."

Her murmured words, spoken with an accent worthy of a great actress, in tones so low that no one else could overhear them, must have thrilled any listener. They went to d'Arthez's heart. The famous man of letters was quite out of

sight; this was a woman striving to rehabilitate herself for the sake of the dead. Perhaps people had slandered her to him; she wanted to know if anything had tarnished her name for this man who had loved her once. Had he died with all his illusions?

"Michel was one of those men who love wholly and completely," returned d'Arthez; "such as he, if they choose amiss, can suffer, but they can never give up her whom they have chosen."

"Then was I loved like that?" she cried, with a look of high beatitude.

"Yes, madame."

"And he was happy through me?"

"For four years."

"No woman ever hears of such a thing without a feeling of proud satisfaction," she said, and there was a modest confusion in the noble sweet face that turned to his.

One of the cleverest manœuvres known to such actresses is a trick of veiling their manner if words have said too much, or of talking with their eyes when other language falls short. There is an irresistible fascination in these ingenious dissonances that creep into the music of love, or true or feigned.

"To have made a great man happy," she went on (and her voice dropped lower and lower when she had assured herself of the effect that she had produced). "To have made a great man happy, and that without committing a crime—this is the fulfilment of one's destiny, is it not?"

"Did he not write to you?"

"Yes, but I wanted to be quite sure; for, believe me, monsieur, when he set me so high, he was not mistaken in me."

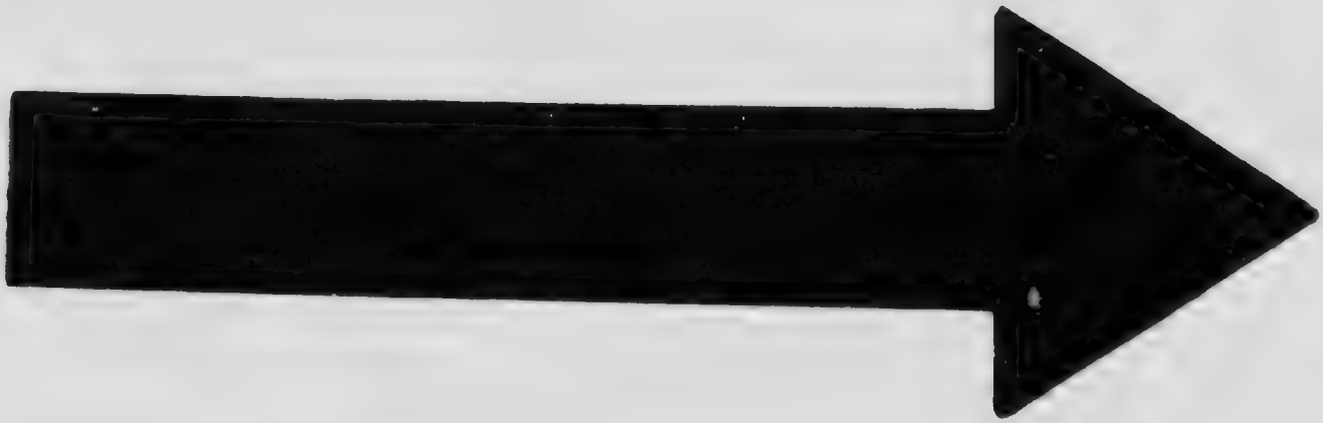
Women have an art of investing their utterances with a certain peculiar sacramental virtue; they can impart an indescribable something to their words, a thrill that gives them a wider significance, a greater depth; and, unless the charmed auditor subsequently takes it into his head to ask himself what those words really meant, the effect is attained—which is the peculiar aim and object of eloquence. If the Princess had

worn the crown of France at that moment, instead of the high plaited coronet of bright hair and wreath of delicate heather, her brows could not have looked more queenly. She seemed to d'Arthez to be walking over the tide of slander as our Saviour walked over the Sea of Galilee; the shroud of her dead love wrapped her round as an aureole clings about an angel. There was not the remotest suggestion that she felt that this was the one position left to her to take up; not a hint of a desire to seem great or loving; it was done simply and quietly. No living man could have done the Princess the service rendered by the dead.

D'Arthez, worker and recluse, had had no experience of the world; study had folded him beneath its sheltering wings. Her words, her tones, found a credulous listener. He had fallen under the spell of her exquisite ways; he was filled with admiration of her flawless beauty, matured by evil fortune, freshened by retirement; he bowed down before that rarest combination—a vivid intellect and a noble soul. He longed, in short, to be Michel Chrestien's heir and successor.

The first beginnings of his love may be traced to an idea—a common case with your profound thinker. While he looked at his neighbor, while his eyes grew familiar with the outlines of her head, the disposition of her delicate features, her shape, her foot, her finely modeled hands; while he saw her now on a closer view than in the days when he accompanied his friend on his wild pursuit of her carriage, he was thinking to himself that here was an instance of that wonderful thing the power of second-sight developed in a man under the influence of love's exaltation. How clearly Michel Chrestien had read this woman's heart and soul by the light of the fire of love! And she too on her side had divined the Federalist; he might, no doubt, have been happy! In this way the Princess was invested with a great charm for d'Arthez; a halo as of poetry shone about her.

In the course of the dinner, d'Arthez remembered Michel's confidences, Michel's despair, Michel's hopes when he fancied that he was loved in return, and his passionate, lyrical out-



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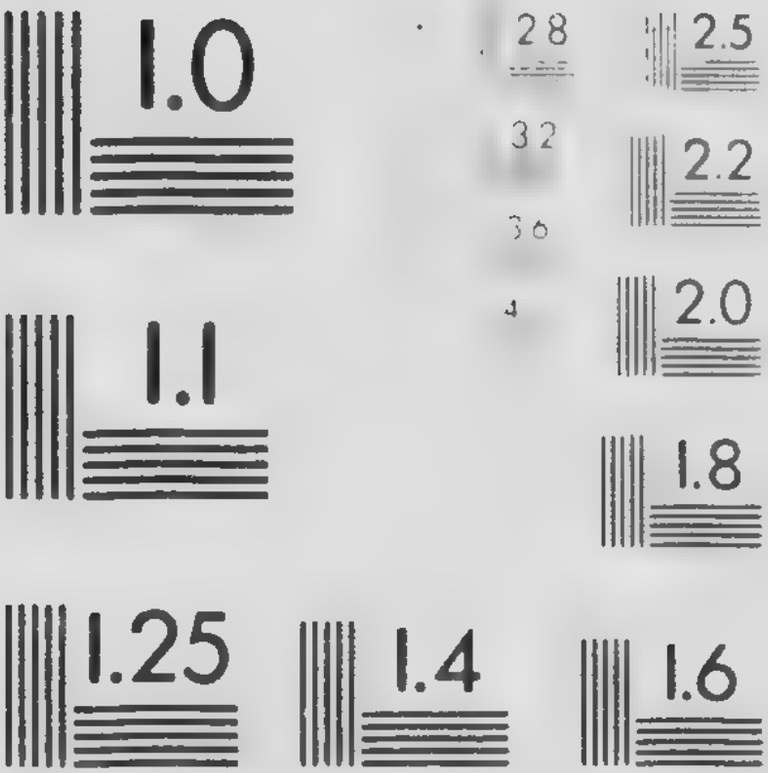

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pourings to the one friend to whom he spoke of his love. And Daniel the while was all unconscious that he was to reap the benefit of the preparations due to chance. It very seldom happens that a confidant can pass without remorse to the estate of rival; d'Arthez could do this, and wrong no one now. In one brief moment he realized the immense distance that separates the high-bred lady, the flower of the great world, from the ordinary woman, whom, however, he only knew by a single specimen. He had been approached on his weakest side, touched on the tenderest spots in his soul and genius. His simplicity, his impetuous imagination urged him to possess this woman; but he felt that the world held him back, and the Princess' bearing, her majesty, be it said, raised a barrier between him and her. It was something new to him to respect the woman he loved; and this unwonted feeling acted in a manner as an irritant; the physical attraction grew all the more potent because he had swallowed the bait, and must keep his uneasiness to himself.

They talked of Michel Chrestien till dessert was served. It was an excuse for lowering their voices on either side. Love, sympathy, intuition—here was her opportunity of posing as a slandered, unappreciated woman! here was his chance of stepping into the dead Republican's shoes! Possibly a man of such candid mind may have detected within himself a certain diminution of regret for the loss of his friend.

But when the dessert shone resplendent on the table; when the light of the candles in the sconces fell upon the rich colors of fruit and sugar-plums among the bouquets of flowers; then, under shelter of the brilliant screen of blossoms that separated the guests, it pleased the Princess to put an end to the confidences. With a word, a delicious word, accompanied by one of the glances that seem to turn a fair-haired woman into a brunette, she found some subtle way of expressing the idea that Daniel and Michel were twin souls. After this d'Arthez threw himself into the general conversation with boyish spirits, and a slightly fatuous air not unworthy of a youth at school.

The Princess took d'Arthez's arm in the simplest way

when they returned to the Marquise's little drawing-room. She lingered a little in the great salon, till the Marquise, on Blondet's arm, was at some little distance from them. Then she stopped d'Arthez.

"It is my wish to be not inaccessible to that poor Republican's friend," she said. "I have made it a rule to receive no visitors, but you shall be the one exception. Do not think of this as a favor. Favors are only possible between strangers, and it seems to me that we are old friends. I wish to look on you as Michel's brother."

D'Arthez could only reply by a pressure of the arm; he found nothing to say.

Coffee was served. Diane de Cadignan wrapped herself in a large shawl with coquettish grace, and rose to go. Blondet and Rastignac knew too much of the world and of courtiers' tact to try to detain her or to make any ill-bred outcry; but Mme. d'Espard, taking the Princess by the hand, induced her to sit down again.

"Wait till the servants have dined," she whispered; "the carriage is not ready."

She made a sign to the footman who carried out the coffee tray. Mme. de Montcornet, guessing that Mme. d'Espard wished to speak with the Princess, drew off d'Arthez, Rastignac, and Blondet by one of those wild paradoxical tirades which Parisiennes understand to admiration.

"Well?" asked the Marquise. "What do you think of him?"

"He is simply an adorable child: he is scarcely out of swaddling clothes. Really, even this time there will be a victory without a struggle, as usual."

"It is disheartening," said Mme. d'Espard, "but there is one thing left."

"And that is?"

"Let me be your rival."

"That is as you shall decide. I have made up my mind what to do. Genius is a kind of cerebral existence; I do not know how to reach its heart. We will talk of this later on."

After that last enigmatic remark, Mme. d'Espard made a plunge into the conversation. Apparently she was neither hurt by the words, "That is as you shall decide," nor curious to know what might come of this interview. The Princess stayed nearly an hour longer on the settee by the fireside. She sat in a listless, careless attitude, like Dido in Guérin's picture; and while she seemed to be absorbed in listening, she glanced now and again at Daniel with undisguised yet well-controlled admiration. The carriage was announced. She grasped the Marquise d'Espard's hand, bowed to Mme. de Montcornet, and vanished.

The Princess' name was not mentioned in the course of the evening. The rest of the party, however, reaped the benefit of d'Arthez's uplifted mood; he talked his best; and, indeed, in Rastignac and Blondet he had two supporters of the first rank as regards quickness of intellect and mental grasp, while the two women had long since been counted among the wittiest great ladies in Paris. To them that evening was like a halt at an oasis; it was a rare enjoyment keenly appreciated by the quartette, who lived in constant dread of the danger signals of society, politics, or drawing-room cliques. Some people are privileged to shine like beneficent stars upon others, giving light to their minds and warmth to their hearts. D'Arthez was one of these finer natures. A man of letters, if he rises to the height of his position, is accustomed to think without restraint, and apt, in society, to forget that everything must not be said; still, as there is almost always a certain originality about his divagations, no one complains of them. It was this savor of originality, so rare in mere cleverness, this simple-minded freshness, that made d'Arthez's character something nobly apart; and in this lay the secret of that delightful evening. D'Arthez came away with the Baron de Rastignac. As they drove home, the latter naturally spoke of the Princess, and asked him what he thought of her.

"No wonder Michel loved her," returned d'Arthez; "she is no ordinary woman."

"A very extraordinary woman," Rastignac returned drily.

'I can tell by the sound of your voice that you are in love with already. You will call before three days are out; I am too old a hand in Paris not to know what will pass ...een you. So, my dear Daniel, I beg you not to fall into ... 'confusion of interests.' Love the Princess by all means ...u feel that you can love her, but bear your interests ...nd. She has never asked or taken two farthings of any whatsoever; she is far too much a Cadignan or ...lles for that; but to my certain knowledge she has not ... squandered a very considerable fortune of her own, she ... made others run through millions of francs. How? why? ... wherefore? Nobody can tell. She does not know herself. ...een years ago I saw her swallow down a charming young ...w's property and an old notary's savings to boot in ... months."

"Thirteen years ago!" exclaimed d'Arthez; "then how old ...?"

"Why, did you not see her son?" Rastignac retorted, laugh- ... "That was her son at table—the Duc de Maufrigneuse, ...oung fellow of nineteen. And nineteen and seventeen ...——"

"Thirty-six!" exclaimed the man of letters in amazement; ... took her for twenty."

"She will be quite willing; but you need have no uneasiness ...at score, she will never be more than twenty for you. ... are setting foot in the most fantastic of worlds.—Good- ... Here you are at home," added Rastignac, as the car- ... turned into the Rue de Bellefond, where d'Arthez lived ... neat house of his own. "We shall met at Mlle. des T...ches' in the course of the week."

D'Arthez allowed love to invade his heart after the fashion ... Uncle Toby, *videlicet,* without the least attempt at re- ...nce. He proceeded at once to uncritical adoration, ad- ...ng the one woman and excluding all others. The Prin- ... one of the most remarkable portents in Paris, where ... thing good or evil is possible—the Princess, fair creature, ...ame for him the "angel of his dreams," hackneyed though

the expression may be, now that it has fallen on evil days. A full comprehension of the sudden transformation wrought in the illustrious man of letters is impossible, unless you remember how solitude and continual work leave the heart dormant, and how painful a connection with a vulgar woman may become, when physical cravings give place to love, and love develops new desires and fancies and regrets, and calls forth the diviner impulses of the highest regions of a man's nature. D'Arthez was, indeed, the child, the schoolboy that the Princess at once discerned him to be.

And the beautiful Diane herself received an almost similar illumination. At last she had found a man above other men, the man whom all women desire to find, even if they only mean to play with him; the power that they consent to obey for the sake of gaining control of it. At last she had discovered a great intellect, combined with a boy's heart, and this in the first dawn of passion; and she saw, with happiness undreamed of, that all this wealth was contained in a form that pleased her.

D'Arthez was handsome, she thought. Perhaps he was. He had reached the sober age of maturity; he had led a quiet, regular life that had preserved a certain bloom of youth through his thirty-eight years; and, like statesmen and men of sedentary life generally, had attained a reasonable degree of stoutness. As a very young man he bore a vague resemblance to the portraits of the young Bonaparte; and the likeness was still as strong as it might be between a dark-eyed man with thick brown hair and the Emperor with his blue eyes and chestnut locks. But all the high and burning ambition that once shone in d'Arthez's eyes had been softened, as it were, by success; the thoughts that lay dormant beneath the lad's forehead had blossomed; the hollows in his face had filled up. Prosperity had mellowed the sallow tints that once told of a penurious life and faculties braced to bear the strain of incessant and exhausting toil.

If you look carefully at the finest faces among ancient philosophers, you can always find that those deviations from

perfect type which give to each face a character of its are rectified by the habit of meditation, and the con- d repose demanded by the intellectual life. The most d visage among them—that of Socrates, for instance— res a well-nigh divine serenity at last. In the noble ity that became d'Arthez's imperial face very well, was something guileless, something of a child's uncon- ness of itself, and a kindliness that went to the hearts thers. He had none of that politeness in which there ays a tinge of insincerity, none of the art by which the bred and most amiable people can assume those qualities they have not, much to the discomfiture of their late- htened dupes. Some sins of omission he might make as sequence of his isolation; but he never jarred upon , and a perfume of the wilderness only enhances the us urbanity of the great man who lays aside his great- to descend to the social level, and, like Henri IV., will r lend a hand in children's games or lend his wit to .

d'Arthez made no attempt at a defence, the Princess, her return home, did not open the question again with lf. There was no more to be said, so far as she was erned; with all her knowledge, and all her ignorance, loved. She only asked herself if she deserved such great iness—what had she done that heaven should send an angel to her? She would be worthy of his love; it d last; it should be hers for ever; the last years of youth waning beauty should be sweet in the paradise that she by glimpses. As for resisting it, as for haggling over lf, or coquetting with her lover, she did not even think of Her thoughts were of something quite different. She un- tood the greatness of genius; she felt instinctively that s is not apt to apply the ordinary rules to a woman of sand. So after a rapid forecast, such as none but great ine natures can make, she vowed to herself to surrender first summons. Her estimate of d'Arthez's character, on a single interview, led her to suspect that there would

be time to make what she wished of herself, to be what she meant to be in the eyes of this sublime lover, before the summons would be made.

And herewith begins an obscure comedy, played on the stage of the inner consciousness of a man and woman, each to be duped by the other. *Tartuffe* is the merest trifle compared with such inscrutable comedies as this; they enlarge the borders of the depravity of human nature; they lie beyond the domain of dramatic art. Extraordinary as they are throughout, they are natural, conceivable, justified by necessity. Such a comedy is a horrible kind of drama, which should be entitled the seamy side of vice.

The Princess began by sending for d'Arthez's books. She had not read a single word of them, but nevertheless she had kept up a flattering conversation on the subject for twenty minutes without making a single slip. She proceeded to read them through, and then tried to compare his work with that of the best contemporary writers. The result was a fit of mental indigestion on the day of d'Arthez's visit. Every day that week she had dressed with unusual care: her toilette expressed an idea for the eyes to accept, without knowing how or wherefore. So she appeared in a combination of soft shades of gray; a listless, graceful half-mourning, an appropriate costume for a woman who felt weary of life, and had nothing left to bind her to life save a few natural ties (her son perhaps). Hers, apparently, was an elegant disgust that stopped short, however, of suicide; she was finishing her allotted time in the earthly prison-house.

She received d'Arthez as though she expected his visit, and had seen him at her house a hundred times, doing him the honor of treating him as an old acquaintance. The conversation began in the most commonplace way. They talked of the weather, of the Cabinet, of de Marsay's bad health, of the hopes of the Legitimist party. D'Arthez was an Absolutist. The Princess could not but know the opinions of a man who sat among the fifteen or twenty Legitimist members

Chamber of Deputies; so she took occasion to tell the of the trick she had played de Marsay; she touched Prince's devotion to the Royal family and to Madame; ence, by an easy transition, brought d'Arthez's atten- the Prince de Cadignan.

There is this at least to be said for him e is an attached devoted servant of His Majesty," said she "His public ter consoles me for all that I have suffered from his e life. But," she continued, adroitly leaving the Prince side, "have you not noticed (for nothing escapes you) men have two sides to their characters? One side they at home, to their wives; it is their true character that rs in private life; the mask is taken off, dissimulation is n end; they do not trouble to seem other than they are; are themselves—often they are horrible. They are noble, and generous for the rest of the world, for the and the Court, and the salons; they wear a costume dered with virtues and bedizened with fine language; possess exquisite qualities in abundance. What a shock- arce it is! And yet there are people that wonder at the some women wear, at their air of superiority over their ands, their indifference——"

She broke off, but allowed her hand to drop till it rested the arm of her chair, a gesture that rounded off her dis- se to admiration. D'Arthez's eyes were intent upon her me figure, upon the lines so gracefully carved against the n depths of her easy-chair; upon the movements of her ; upon a certain fascinating little wrinkle that played nd down over her bust, a daring device which only suits ist so slender that it has nothing to lose by it. The ess, watching him, took up the order of her thoughts, hough she were speaking to herself.

"I will say no more," she said. "For as for women that themselves out for 'misunderstood,' and victims of ill- d unions who take themselves dramatically and pose teresting persons—that kind of thing seems to me hope- vulgar, and you authors have ended by making such

women very ridiculous. One must either submit, and there is no more to be said, or one resists and finds amusement. In either case a woman should keep silence. It is true that I could not make up my mind to do either, but that is so much the more reason, perhaps, for keeping silence now. How silly it is to complain! If a woman is not equal to the circumstances, if she fails in tact, or sense, or subtlety, she deserves her fate. Are not women queens in France? They play with you when they choose, as they choose, and for as long as they choose."

She swung her scent-bottle, with a marvelous blending of feminine insolence and mocking gaiety in her gesture.

"I have often heard contemptible little creatures regret that they were women," she continued; "and I always felt sorry for them. If I had the choice, I would be a woman over again. Ah! the pleasure and pride of owing your triumphs to strength, to all the power put in your hands by laws of your own framing! And when we see you at our feet, doing and saying foolish things for our sakes, is it not intoxicating joy to feel that the woman's weakness triumphs? So, when we succeed, we are bound to keep silence under penalty of losing our ascendency. And after a defeat, a woman's pride bids her be silent. The slave's silence dismays the master."

While this prattle was piped forth in those winning tones of gentle derision, with an accompaniment of little dainty turns of the head, d'Arthez was spellbound, just as a partridge is fascinated by the sportsman's dog. This kind of woman was something quite new in his experience.

"Tell me, madame, I beg of you, how any man could have made you suffer; be sure that where other women would be vulgar, you would be distinguished, even if you had not a manner of saying things that would make a cookery-book interesting."

"You are going far in friendship," she said, so gravely, that d'Arthez grew serious and uneasy.

She changed the subject. It grew late. The man of

s, poor fellow, went away in a contrite frame of mind; d seemed inquisitive; he had hurt her feelings; and he convinced that she had suffered as few women suffer. had spent her life in amusing herself; she was neither nor less than a feminine Don Juan, with this difference he had tempted the stone statue it would not have been an invitation to supper, and she certainly would not had the worst of the encounter.

impossible to continue this history without a word the Prince de Cadignan (better known as the Duc de rigneuse), or the whole salt and savor of the Princess' ulous inventions will be lost upon the reader. An out- could never understand the atrocity of the comedy h the lady has been playing for the benefit of a man tters. In person M. le Duc de Maufrigneuse, like his er the Prince de Cadignan, was tall and spare; he was a plete fine gentleman, his urbanity never deserted him; ade charming speeches; he became a colonel by the grace God, and a good soldier by accident. In other respects Prince was as brave as a Pole, showed his valor on all asions without discrimination, and used the jargon of Court circles to hide his mental vacuity. Ever since he at- ed the age of thirty-six he had been perforce as indifferent the sex as his royal master King Charles X.; for, like his ter, he had found too much favor with the fair in his , and now was paying the penalty. He had been the of the Faubourg Saint-Germain for eighteen years, dur- hich time he led the dissipated, pleasure-filled life of an son.

Revolution had ruined his father; and though after Restoration the late Prince had recovered his post, the rnorship of a royal castle, with a salary and divers pen- s, he had kept up the state of a *grand seigneur* of old days, and squandered his fortune during the brief gleam of perity to such purpose, that all the sums repaid him by law of indemnity went in a display of luxury in his immense old mansion. It was the only piece of property left

to him, and the greater part of it was occupied by his daughter-in-law. The old Prince de Cadignan died at the ripe age of eighty-seven, some years before the Revolution of July. He had ruined his wife, and for a long time there had been something like a coolness between him and his son-in-law, the Duc de Navarreins; the Duke's first wife had been a Cadignan, and the accounts of the trust of her fortune had never been satisfactorily settled.

The present Prince (then the Duc de Maufrigneuse) had had a *liaison* with the Duchesse d'Uxelles. Towards 1814, when the Duke reached his thirty-sixth year, the Duchess, seeing that he was poor but stood very well at Court, gave him her daughter with a rent-roll of fifty or sixty thousand livres, to say nothing of expectations. In this way Mlle d'Uxelles became a duchess, her mother knowing that in all probability the newly married wife would be allowed great liberty. An heir was born, after which unexpected piece of good fortune the Duke left his wife complete freedom of action, amused himself by going from garrison to garrison, spent the winters in Paris, contracted debts which his father paid, and professed the most complete indifference for his wife. He always gave the Duchess a week's warning before returning to Paris. Adored by his regiment, in high favor with the Dauphin, an adroit courtier, and something of a gambler, there was no sort of affectation about the Duc de Maufrigneuse; the Duchess never could persuade him to take up an Opéra girl, out of regard for appearances and consideration for her, as she pleasantly said. The Duke succeeded to his father's post at Court, and contrived to please both Louis XVIII. and Charles X., which shows that he understood how to turn a colorless character to a tolerable good account; and besides, his life and behavior were covered over by the most elegant veneer. In language and fine manners he was a perfect model; he was popular even among Liberals. The Cadignans, according to the Prince his father, were famous for ruining their wives; in this respect, however, he found it impossible to keep up the family tradi-

the Duchess was running through her fortune too y for him.

e little details of the family history were public prop- Court and in the Faubourg Saint-Germain; so much fact, that if any one had begun to discuss them, he have been met with a smile. A man might as well announced the capture of Holland by the Dutch. No n ever mentioned the "charming Duke" without a word praise. His conduct towards his wife had been perfect; not a small thing for a man to behave himself as well Maufrigneuse had done, he had left the Duchess' fortune ely at her disposal; he had given her his support and nance on every occasion. And indeed, from pride, od nature, or from some chivalrous feeling, M. de Mau- use had many a time come to the Duchess' rescue; any woman would have gone under, in spite of her connec- in spite of the combined credit of the old Duchesse elles, the Duc de Navarreins, the old Prince de Cadignan, her husband's aunt. The present Prince is allowed to be of the true nobles among the noblesse. And perhaps, if artier is faithful at need, he has won the finest of all tories over himself.

The Duchesse d'Uxelles was a woman of five-and-forty n she married her daughter to the Duc de Maufrigneuse, therefore she saw her old friend's success not merely ithout jealousy, but with interest. At the time of the mar- she had showed herself a great lady and saved the situa- though she could not prevent scoffing on the part of eful persons at Court, who said that the Duchess' noble duct cost her no great effort, albeit she had given the past years to repentance and devotion, after the manner of en who stand in great need of forgiveness.

To return to Diane de Cadignan. The extent of the ledge of literature which she displayed grew more and remarkable day by day. She could venture with the ost boldness upon the most abstruse questions, thanks to

studies daily and nightly pursued with an intrepidity worthy of all praise. D'Arthez was bewildered. He was incapable of suspecting that Diane, like a good many writers, repeated at night what she read of a morning. He took her for a woman of no ordinary power. In the course of these conversations they wandered further and further from the end that Diane had in view; she tried to return to the ground of confidential talk, but it was not very easy to bring a man of d'Arthez's temper back to a subject after he had once been warned from it. However, after a month of excursions into literature and beautiful Platonic discourses, d'Arthez grew bolder, and came every day at three o'clock. At six he took leave, only to return three hours later to stay till midnight or one o'clock in the morning. This with the regularity of an impatient lover; and the Princess, on her side, was always more or less carefully dressed at his hours. The tryst thus kept daily, the pains that they both took with themselves, their whole proceedings, in fact, expressed the feelings to which neither of them dared to confess: and the Princess divined in some marvelous way that the grown child dreaded the coming contest as much as she herself longed for it. And yet d'Arthez's manner was a constant declaration of love—a declaration made with a respect which was inexpressibly pleasant to the Princess. Every day they felt so much the more closely drawn together, because there was no convention, no sharp line of difference to arrest the progress of their ideas; no barrier was raised, as frequently happens between lovers, by formal demands on the one side, and coquettish or sincere demurs upon the other. Like most men whose youth lasts on until middle age, d'Arthez was consumed by a poignant irresolution caused by vehement desires on the one hand, and the dread of incurring his mistress' displeasure on the other. A young woman understands nothing of all this while she shares the emotion, but the Princess was too experienced not to linger over its delights. So Diane enjoyed to the full the delicious child's-play of love, finding all the more charm in it because she knew so well how to put an

to it. She was like a great artist, dwelling complacently the vague outlines of a sketch, sure of the coming hour of piration that shall shape a masterpiece out of an idea that s as yet in the limbo of things unborn. How many , as she saw that d'Arthez was ready to advance, she sed herself by checking him with her queenly air. She d control the tempest in the man's boyish heart, she could the storm and still it again, by a glance, by giving him hand to kiss, by some commonplace word uttered in a tremulous voice.

This policy of hers had been coolly resolved upon, and acted it out divinely, gradually deepening the lines of image engraven upon the heart of a clever man of letters whom it pleased her to make a child. With her he was tful, open, almost simple; and yet at times something a reaction would set in, and she could not but admire the 's greatness, blended with such innocence. The arch-co- te's play was binding her at unawares to her bond-slave. ngth Diane grew impatient with her love-sick Epictetus; as soon as she felt that he was disposed to put a blind th in her, she set herself to tie a thick bandage over his s.

One evening Daniel found the Princess in a pensive mood. She was sitting with one elbow on the table, her bright golden bathed in the lamplight, while she played with a letter, ently tapping it upon the tablecloth. When d'Arthez had allowed a full view of the letter, she folded it and thrust into her belt.

"What is the matter?" asked d'Arthez. "You look bled."

"I have heard from M. de Cadignan," she replied. eply as he has wronged me, I have been thinking, since read this letter, that he is an exile, and alone; he is fond of his son, and his son is away from him."

Her soul seemed to vibrate through her voice; to d'Arthez it was a revelation of a divine sensitiveness to another's pain. It touched him to the quick. His lover's eagerness to read

her became, as it were, a piece of curious literary and scientific inquiry. If he could only know the height of her woman's greatness; the full extent of the injuries forgiven; and learn how near the angels a woman of the world may rise while others accuse her of frivolity and selfishness and hardness of heart! Then he remembered that once before he had sought to know this angel's heart, and how he had been repulsed. He took the slender transparent hand with its taper fingers in his, and said, with something like a tremor in his voice, "Are we friends enough now for you to tell me what you have suffered? Old troubles must count for something in your musings."

"Yes," said the fair Diane, prolonging the one syllable; Tulou's flute never sighed forth a sweeter sound. Then she drifted again into musings, her eyes clouded over; and as Daniel waited in anxious suspense, the solemnity of the moment penetrated his being. His poet's imagination beheld the cloud veiling the sanctuary; slowly the obscurity would clear away, and he should behold the wounded lamb lying at the feet of God.

"Well?" he said softly and quietly.

Diane looked into his face with its look of tender entreaty, then her eyes fell slowly, and the lashes drooped; the movement was a revelation of the noblest delicacy. A man must have been a monster to imagine that there could be a taint of hypocrisy in the graceful curve of the throat, as Diane raised her little dainty head to send a glance into the very depths of those hungry eyes.

"Can I? and ought I?" she began, with a certain hesitation, and her face wore a sublime expression of dreamy tenderness as she gazed at d'Arthez. "Men keep faith so little in such things. They feel so little bound to secrecy."

"Ah! but if you cannot trust me, why am I here?" he cried.

"Ah! my friend, does a woman calculate when she binds herself to a friendship for life?" answered Diane, and there was all the charm of an involuntary confession about her

words. "It is not a question of refusing you (what can I refuse to you?); but what would you think of me if I should speak? Willingly I would tell you of my position, a strange one at my age; but what would you think of a wife who would lay bare the wounds dealt to her by her own husband, and betray the secrets of another? Turenne kept his word with thieves; ought I not to show the honor of a Turenne towards those who tortured me?"

"Have you given your word to any one?"

"M. de Cadignan thought it unnecessary to ask for secrecy. So you would have more of me than myself? Ah! tyrant, am I to bury my honesty in you?" and her glance made the pretended confidence seem something greater than the gift of her person.

"You rate me rather too low if you can fear any wrong whatsoever from me," he said with ill-disguised bitterness.

"Forgive me, my friend," she said. She took his hand in hers, caressing it with a most loving soft touch of her fingers. "I know all your worth. You have told me the story of your life; it is a noble, a beautiful story; it is sublime, it is worthy of your name; perhaps you think I owe you mine in return? But at this very moment I am afraid of lowering myself in your eyes by telling secrets that are not mine only. And, poet and lonely thinker as you are, perhaps you may not believe in the horrors of worldly life. Oh! when you invent your tragedies, you little know what tragedies are going on in many an apparently closely united family! You do not imagine the extent of the wretchedness beneath the gilding."

"I know all," he cried.

"No, nothing," she answered. "Ought a daughter to betray her mother?"

At these words of hers, d'Arthez felt as if he had lost his way in darkness among the Alps, and found, with the first rays of dawn, that he stood on the very edge of a bottomless precipice. He looked with dazed eyes at the Princess, and a cold chill crept over him. For a moment Diane thought that the man of genius was a weakling; but a flash in his eyes reassured her.

"And now, you are almost like a judge for me," she said despairingly. "And I may speak, for every slandered creature has a right to prove its innocence. I have been, nay—if any one remembers a poor recluse, a woman forced by the world to renounce the world—I am still accused of such light conduct, of so many sins, that I may be forgiven for putting myself in the true light for the heart in which I find a refuge from which I shall not be driven forth. It has always seemed to me that self-justification tells heavily against innocence; for that reason I have always scorned to defend myself; to whom, indeed, could I speak? Painful things like these can only be confided to God, or to some one very near Him, to a priest or to a second self. Ah, well, if my secrets are not there," she added, laying a hand on d'Arthez's breast, "as they are here" (bending the busk of her corset with her fingers), "you cannot be the great d'Arthez, and I have been mistaken in you."

D'Arthez's eyes filled, and Diane drank in those tears: she gave him a sidelong glance with steady eyes and unquivering eyelids. It was as deft and neat as a cat's spring on a mouse. Then, for the first time, after sixty days of protocols, d'Arthez took the warm, moist hand, carried it to his lips, and set a kiss upon it—a slow, long kiss, drawn from the wrist to the finger-tips, taken with such delicate rapture that the Princess, bending her head, augured very well of literature. In her opinion, men of genius ought to love more perfectly than men of the world, coxcombs, diplomates, or even military men, though these certainly have nothing else to do. Diane had had experience. She knew that a man's character as a lover is revealed by very small signs and tokens. If a woman is learned in this lore, she can tell from a mere gesture what she has to expect; much as Cuvier could examine a fragment of a fossil foot, and say, "This belonged to an animal that lived so many thousand years ago: its habit was amphibious, carnivorous, herbivorous, or what not; it had or had not horns, and so forth." She felt sure that the imagination which d'Arthez put into his literary style would show itself in his

love; so she held it expedient to bring him to the highest degree of passion and belief in her. She drew her hand back at once, with a magnificent gesture fraught with emotion. If she had said in words, "No more of that, you will kill me!" she could not have spoken more forcibly. For a moment her eyes rested upon his; joy and fear and prudery and confusion and languor; a vague longing and something of a maiden's shyness were mingled in their expression. For that moment she was a girl of twenty. She had prepared, you may be sure, for that hour's comedy; never had woman dressed herself with such art; and now, as she sat in her easy chair, she looked like a flower ready to open out at the first kiss of the sun. Real or artificial, whichever she was, she intoxicated Daniel.

And here, if it is permissible to hazard a personal opinion, we confess that it would be delightful to be thus deceived as long as possible. Talma on the stage certainly rose far above nature many a time; but is not the Princesse de Lignan the greatest actress of our day? Nothing was wanting to her save an attentive audience. But, unfortunately, women disappear in stormy epochs; they are like water-lilies, they must have a cloudless sky and the softest of warm breezes if they are to blossom and spread themselves before our enchanted eyes.

The hour had come. Diane was about to entangle a great man in the inextricable toils of a romance that had long been growing; and he was to listen to it as a catechumen might have listened to an epistle from one of the apostles in the palmy days of the Christian Church.

"My mother, who is still living at Uxelles, married me in 1811 to M. de Maufrigneuse when I was seventeen years old (you see, my friend, how old I am). She made the match, not out of love for me, but from love of *him*. He was the only man she had ever cared for; so she repaid him in this way for the happiness that he had given her. Oh! do not be shocked by the ugly combination; it is a thing that often happens. Some women put their lover before their children,

just as most women are mothers rather than wives. The two instincts of wifely love and motherhood, developed as they are by social conditions, often come into conflict in a woman's heart. One of them must necessarily supplant the other unless both kinds of love are equally strong, as sometimes happens with an extraordinary woman, the glory of our sex. A man of your genius surely will understand these things: fools wonder at them, yet they are none the less founded in nature. I will go further, they are justifiable by differences in character, temperament, situation, and the nature of the attachment. If I myself, for instance, at this moment,—after twenty years of misfortune, and disappointment, and heavy trials, and hollow pleasures, and slander which I could not refute—if I were offered a true and lasting love, might I not feel ready to fling myself at the feet of the man who offered it? If I did, would not the world condemn me? And yet, surely twenty years of wretchedness ought to buy absolution for twelve years given to a pure and hallowed love—the twelve years of life that remain before I fade? But it will not be; I am not foolish enough to diminish my merits in the eyes of God. I have borne the burden and heat of the day until evening; I will finish my day; I shall have earned my reward——"

"What an angel!" thought d'Arthez.

"In short, though the Duchesse d'Uxelles cared more for M. de Maufrigneuse than for the poor Diane whom you see before you, I have never borne her a grudge. My mother had scarcely seen me; she had forgotten me; but her behavior to me, as between woman and woman, was bad; and what is bad between woman and woman becomes hateful between mother and daughter. Mothers that lead such a life as the Duchesse d'Uxelles led keep their daughters at a distance. I only 'came out' a fortnight before my marriage. Judge of my innocence! I knew nothing; I was incapable of guessing the motives that brought the match about. I had a fine fortune—sixty thousand livres a year from forests, which they either could not sell or had forgotten to sell during the Revo-

lution, and the château d'Anzy in the Nivernais to which the est belonged. M. de Maufrigneuse was burdened with ts. If I afterwards came to understand what debts meant, the time of my marriage I was too completely ignorant life to suspect the significance of the word. The accumu- d interest of my fortune went to pacify my husband's itors.

"M. de Maufrigneuse was thirty-eight years old when I was rried to him; but those years were like a soldier's campaigns; they should count double. Oh, he was far more than enty-six years old. My mother at the age of forty had still e pretensions to beauty; and I found that I was between jealousy on either side. What a life I led for the next years! . . . Ah! if people but knew how the poor, ch-suspected young wife suffered! To be watched by a ther who was jealous of her own daughter! Ah, God! . . . You writers of tragedies will never invent a drama dark and so cruel! I think, from the little I know of literature, that a play as a rule is a series of events, conversations, and actions which lead to the catastrophe; but thing of which I am speaking to you is a most dreadful catastrophe without end. It is as if the avalanche that fell this morning should fall again at night—and yet again next rning. A cold shudder runs through me while I speak it, while I light up the cavern from which there was no pe, the cold, gloomy place where I used to live. If you st know all, the birth of my child—altogether mine, indeed, for you must surely have been struck by his likeness me?—he has my hair, my eyes, the outline of my face, mouth, my smile, my chin, my teeth—well, my child's h was due either to chance or to some agreement between mother and my husband. For long after my marriage s still a girl; I was abandoned, so to speak, directly rwards; I was a mother, but a girl still. The Duchess pleased to prolong the period of ignorance, and to n this end a mother has horrible advantages. As for a poor, little creature brought up like a mystic rose

in a convent, I knew nothing of married life, I developed late, and felt very happy; I rejoiced over the good understanding and the harmony that prevailed in the family. I did not care much for my husband, and he took no pains to please me; and at length my thoughts were altogether diverted from me by the first joys of motherhood, joys the more keenly felt because I had no suspicion that there could be any others. So much had been dinned into my ears about the respect that a mother owed herself! And besides, a girl always loves to 'play at mamma.' At that age a child is as good as a doll. I was so proud too to have that lovely flower, for Georges was a lovely child—a wonder! How could one think of society while one had the pleasure of nursing and tending a little angel? I adore little children while they are quite little and pink and white. So I saw no one but my baby; I lived with him; I would not allow his nurse to dress or undress him or to change his clothes. The little cares that grow so wearisome to the mother of a regiment of babes were all pure pleasure to me. But after three or four years, as I am not altogether a fool, the light broke in upon me in spite of all the pains they took to bandage my eyes. Can you imagine me when the awakening came, four years afterwards, in 1819. *Deux Frères ennemis* is a rose-water tragedy compared with the dramatic situation in which the Duchess and I, mother and daughter, were placed with regard to each other. Then I defied both her and my husband, by flirting publicly in a way that made people talk. Heaven knows what they did not say. You can understand, my friend, that the men with whom I was accused of light conduct were simply daggers that I used to defend myself against the enemy. My thoughts were so full of revenge that I did not feel the wounds that I dealt myself. I was innocent as a child; people looked upon me as a depraved woman, one of the worst of women. I knew nothing of this.

"The world is very stupid, very ignorant, very blind. People only penetrate into the secrets that interest them and serve their spite; but when the greatest and nobles things are to

[illegible] seen, they put their hands before their eyes. And yet, it seems to me that the pride that thrilled through me and shook me in those days, the indignant innocence in my expression and attitudes, would have been a godsend to a great painter. The tempest of anger in me must have flashed like lightning through a ballroom; my disdain must have poured out like a flood. It was wasted passion. Nothing save the indignation of twenty years can rise to such sublime tragic heights. As we grow older we cannot feel indignant, we are tired; evil is not a surprise; we grow cowardly, we are afraid. As for me, I made fine progress. I acted like the veriest fool; I bore the blame of wrongdoing, and had none of the pleasure. I enjoyed compromising myself. I played child's tricks.

"I went to Italy with a hare-brained boy; he made love to me, and I threw him over; but when I found out that he had got himself into a scrape on my account (he had forged a bill), I hurried to the rescue. My mother and my husband, who knew the secret of it all, kept a tight hand over me as an extravagant wife. Oh! that time I went to the King. Louis XVIII., though he had no heart, was touched. He gave me a hundred thousand francs out of the privy purse. The Marquis d'Esgrignon (you may perhaps have met him in society, he married a very rich heiress afterwards), the Marquis d'Esgrignon was rescued from the depths into which I plunged for me. This adventure, brought about by my heedlessness, made me reflect. I saw then that I was the first to suffer from my revenge. My mother and husband and father-in-law had every one on their side; they stood to all appearance between me and the consequences of my recklessness. My mother knew that I was far too proud, too great, too truly a d'Uxelles, to do anything commonplace; about this time she grew frightened by the mischief she had done. She was fifty-two years old. She left Paris and went to live at d'Uxelles. Now she repents of her sins towards me, and expiates them by the most extravagant devotion and boundless love. But in 1823 she left me alone, face to face with Mme de Maufrigneuse.

"Oh, my friend, you men cannot know what an elderly man of pleasure is; nor what a house is like when a man is accustomed to have women of the world burning incense before him, and finds neither censer nor perfumes at home; when he is dead to everything, and jealous for that very reason. When M. de Maufrigneuse was mine alone, I tried, I tried to be a good wife; but I came into conflict with the asperities of a morose temper, with all the fancies of an effete voluptuary; the driveling puerilities, the vain self-sufficiency of a man who was, to tell truth, the most tedious, maundering grumbler in the world. He treated me like a little girl; it gave him pleasure to humiliate me on every occasion, to crush me with the bludgeon of his experience, and to show me how completely ignorant I was. He mortified me at every moment. He did everything, in fact, to make himself detestable and to give me a right to deceive him; but for three or four years I was the dupe of my own heart and my desire to do right. Do you know what a shameful speech it was that urged me to fresh recklessness? Could you imagine the supreme lengths to which slander is carried in society?—'The Duchesse de Maufrigneuse has gone back to her husband,' people said.—'Pooh! out of sheer depravity; it is a triumph to quicken the dead, nothing else remains for her to do,' replied my best friend, a relative at whose house I had the pleasure of meeting you."

"Mme. d'Espard!" exclaimed Daniel, aghast.

"Oh, I have forgiven her, my friend. The speech was extremely clever, to go no further, and I may perhaps have said more cruel things of other unhappy women who were quite as pure as I was."

Again d'Arthez kissed her hands. The sainted woman had chopped her mother to pieces and served her up to him; the Prince de Cadignan, whose acquaintance we have previously made, had been put forward as an Othello of the blackest dye; and now she was acknowledging her faults and scourging herself vigorously—all to assume, for the eyes of this guileless man of letters, that virgin estate which the simplest woman tries at all costs to offer to her lover.

You can understand, my friend, that when I went back the world, it was to make a sensation, and I intended ke a sensation. There were fresh struggles to be gone ch; I had to gain independence and to counteract M. Maufrigneuse. So I began a life of dissipation for new ns. I tried to forget myself, I tried to forget real life life of dreams; I shone in society, I entertained; I was ness, and I got into debt. At home I found forgetful- n sleep. Beautiful, high-spirited, and reckless, I began life in the world; but in the weary struggle between s and reality, I ran through my fortune.

revolt of 1830 came just as this chapter out of the *n Nights* drew to an end; and just at that time I found ure and sacred love which I longed to know. (I am with you!) It was not unnatural (admit) that when an's heart had been repressed again and again by fate, uld awaken at last at the age when a woman sees that s been cheated of her due? I saw that so many women me were happy through love. Oh! why was Michel en so much in awe of me? Then again is another n my life. There was no help for it. When the crash I had lost everything; I had not a single illusion left; pressed out the last drops of all experience, but of one I had not tasted, and I had neither taste nor teeth l In short, by the time I was obliged to leave the world disenchanted. There was something providential in s in the insensibility that prepares us for death," she , with a gesture full of religious unction.

erything that happened just then helped me," she con- d: "the downfall and ruin of the Monarchy buried me sight. My son makes up to me for a great deal. hood compensates us for all our thwarted powers of People are astonished by my retreat, but I have found Oh! if you but knew how happy the poor before you has grown. The joys which I have not and shall never know, are all forgotten in the joy of ing myself for my son's sake. Who could think that

life, for the Princesse de Cadignan, would be summed up by a wretched marriage-night, the adventures with which she is credited, and a childish defiance of two dark passions? Nobody could believe it. At this day I am afraid of everything. I remember so many delusions and misfortunes that I should be sure to repulse genuine feeling, and pure love for love's sake; just as rich men repulse the deserving poor because some hypocritical knave has disgusted them with charity. All this is horrible, is it not? But, believe me, this that I have told you is the history of many another woman."

The last words were spoken in light jesting tones, which recalled the flippant woman of fashion. D'Arthez was dazed. The convict sent to the hulks for robbery and murder with aggravating circumstances, or for forging a signature on a bill, was in his eyes a sainly innocent compared with men and women of the world. The atrocious jeremiad had been forged in the arsenal of falsehood, and dipped in the waters of the Parisian Styx; there was an unmistakable ring of truth in the Duchess' tones. D'Arthez gazed at her for a while; and she (adorable woman) lay in the depths of her great chair, her white hands resting on the arms like drops of dew at the edge of a flower-petal. She was overcome by her own revelations; she seemed to have lived again through all her past sorrows as she spoke of them, and now sank exhausted. She was an angel of melancholy in fact.

Suddenly she sat upright, and raised her hand, while lightnings blazed in the eyes that were supposed to be purified by twenty years of chastity. "Judge of the impression that your friend's love must have made on me!" she cried, "but by the savage irony of fate—or was it God's irony?—he died; he died when (I confess it) I was so thirsty for love that if a man had been worthy of me, he would have found me weak; he died to save the life of another, and that other was—who but M. de Cadignan? Are you surprised to find me pensive?"

It was the last stroke. Poor d'Arthez could bear no more. He fell on his knees before her, he hid his face in her hands,

[illegible] his tears fell fast—happy tears, such as angels might [illegible] if angels weep. And since Daniel's face was hidden, M[illegible] de Cadignan could allow a mischievous smile of tri[illegible] to steal across her mouth, a smile such as monkeys [illegible] summon up over a piece of superlative mischief, if monkeys laugh.

"Aha! I have him fast!" thought she.

And true enough, she had him fast.

"Then you are [illegible]—" he began, raising that fine head of [illegible] to gaze lovingly into her eyes.

"Virgin and martyr," she finished his sentence for him, [illegible]ing at the commonplace phrase, but her cruel smile lent [illegible] enchanting significance to the words. "I laugh," she said, "[illegible]use I am thinking of the Princess as the world knows [illegible] of that Duchesse de Maufrigneuse to whom the world [illegible]ns de Marsay as a lover; and the villainous political [illegible], d'Trailles; and empty-headed little d'Esgrignon, and R[illegible]stignac and Rubempré, and ambassadors and Cabinet [illegible]ister, and Russian generals,—and all Europe, for any[illegible]g I know. There has been much gossip about this album [illegible] I have made; people believe that all my admirers were [illegible]overs. Oh! it is shocking! I cannot think how I can [illegible] a man at my feet; I ought to despise them all; that should be my creed."

[illegible] rose and stood in the window; her manner of going was full of magnificent suggestion.

D'Arthez stayed on the hearth-stool where he had been [illegible]ing. He did not dare to follow the Princess, but he [illegible] at her, he heard her use her handkerchief. It was a [illegible] matter of form; what is a princess that blows her nose? [illegible]ne tried to do the impossible to confirm d'Arthez's belief [illegible]r sensibility. His angel was in tears! He flew to her, [illegible] his arm about her waist, and held her tightly to him.

"No, no, leave me," she murmured faintly. "I have too [illegible]ny doubts to be good for anything. The task of recon[illegible]ing me with life is beyond a man's strength."

"Diane! I will give you love for all the life that you have [illegible]"

"No, do not talk to me like that," she answered. "I feel guilty; I am trembling at this moment as if I had committed the worst of sins."

Diane had recovered a little maid's innocence, yet nevertheless she stood before him august and great and noble as a queen. It was a clever manœuvre, so clever that she had wheeled round from seeming, and reached the actual truth; and as for d'Arthez, no words will describe the effect produced by it upon his inexperience and open nature. Great man of letters as he was, he stood dumb with admiration, a passive spectator waiting for a word, while the Princess waited for a kiss. But she had grown too sacred to him for that. Diane felt cold in the window; her feet were freezing; she went back to her old position in the chair.

"He will be a long while about it," thought she, looking at Daniel with a proud forehead and face sublime with virtue.

"Is she a woman?" the profound observer of human nature was asking of himself. "How should one act with her?"

They spent their time till two o'clock in the morning in the fond, foolish talk that such women as the Princess can turn into adorable discourse. She was too old, she said. Too faded, too much of a wreck; d'Arthez proved to her that she had the most delicate, soft, and fragrant skin; delicious to touch, and white and fair to see, of which things she was fully convinced in her own mind. She was young; she was in her flower. Her beauty was disputed, charm by charm, detail by detail, with—"Do you think so?—You are raving!—This is desire.—In a fortnight you will see me as I am.—In truth, I am verging on forty; how should any one love a woman of my age?"

D'Arthez was impetuous as a schoolboy, his eloquence was sown thickly with the most extravagant words. And the Princess, listening, laughed within herself, while she heard the ingenious writer talking like a love-sick sub-lieutenant, and seemed to drink in the nonsense, and to be quite touched by it.

Out in the street d'Arthez asked himself whether he ought

to have been less in awe of her. As he went through the ange confidences that had been made to him—naturally, y have been much abridged and condensed here, for the lifluous utterances given in full, with their appropriate mmentary of expression and gesture, would fill a volume— he looked through his memory, the plausibility of the nance, the depths below the surface, and the Princess' s, all combined to foil the retrospective sagacity of an te but straightforward man.

"It is true," he told himself as he lay wide awake, "it is that there are tragedies in society. Society hides such rrors as this beneath the flowers of delicate luxury, the embellishments of scandal, and the sparkle of anecdotes. We cannot imagine anything that has not happened. Poor Diane! Michel caught a glimpse of the enigma when he told us that there were volcanic fires under the ice! And Blanchon and Rastignac are right too. When a man can find high ideals and the intoxication of desire both blended in the love of a woman—a woman of quick intelligence and refinement and dainty ways—it must surely be unspeakable ..."

He tried to fathom the love in his heart, and found no its.

Towards two o'clock next day, Mme. d'Espard called on Princess. An intense curiosity brought her. For more n a month she had neither seen her friend nor received a gle tell-tale word. Nothing could be more amusing than irst half-hour of the conversation between two daughters Eve endowed with the wisdom of the serpent. Diane de gnan shunned the subject of d'Arthez as she would avoid low dress. And the Marquise wheeled about the question Bedouin Arab might hover about a rich caravan. Diane d the situation; the Marquise grew furious. Diane watching her opportunity; she meant to turn her dear nd to account as a sporting dog. And one of the two rated women was more than a match for the other. The cess rose a head above the Marquise; and Mme. d'Espard

in her own mind admitted her inferiority. Herein, possibly, lay the secret of the bond between them. The weaker spirit of the two lay low, feigning an attachment, watching for the moment so long looked for by the weak, the chance of springing at the throat of the strong, and leaving the impress of one joyous bite. Diane saw this perfectly well. The rest of the world was completely deceived by the amenities that passed between the two dear friends.

The Princess waited; and as soon as she saw the question rise to her friend's lips, she said, "Well, dear; I owe a great, complete, and boundless happiness to you."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you remember our ruminations three months ago, as we sat out in the garden on the bench under the jessamine in the sun? Ah! well; no one can love like a man of genius. I would willingly say of my great Daniel d'Arthez as Catherine de' Medici said of the Duke of Alva, 'One salmon's head is worth all the frogs' heads in the world.'"

"I am not at all surprised that you do not come to me," said Mme. d'Espard.

"Promise me, my angel, if he goes to see you, not to say a word of me," continued the Princess, as she took the Marquise's hand. "I am happy—oh! happy beyond words—and you know how far an epigram or a jest may go in society. A word can be fatal; some people can put so much poison in a word. If you only knew how I have wished during the past week that you too might find such a passionate love! And, indeed, it is sweet; it is a glorious triumph for us women if we may finish our lives as women thus, with an ardent, pure, complete, whole-hearted, and devoted love to soothe us at last after so long a quest."

"Why ask me to be true to my best friend?" said Mme. d'Espard. "Can you think me capable of playing you a vile trick?"

"When a woman possesses such a treasure, it is so natural to fear to lose it, that the thought of fear occurs to her at once. I am absurd. Forgive me, dear."

A few moments later, the Marquise took leave.

"What a character she will give me!" thought the Princess as she watched her departure. "But I will save her the trouble of tearing Daniel away; I will send him to her at once."

Daniel came in a few minutes afterwards. In the middle of an interesting conversation the Princess suddenly interrupted him, laying her beautiful hand on his arm.

"Forgive me, my friend, but I might forget to mention something; it seems a silly trifle, yet it is a matter of the utmost importance. You have not set foot in Mme. d'Espard's house since that day—a thousand times blessed!—when I met you for the first time. Go to her; not out of politeness, but for my sake. Perhaps she may be offended with me; she may possibly have chanced to hear that you have scarcely left my house, so to speak, since her dinner-party. And besides, my friend, I should not like you to give up your connections and society, nor your work and occupations. I should be more outrageously slandered than ever. What would they not say of me?—'That I am holding you in a leash, that I am monopolizing you, that I am afraid of comparisons, that I want to be talked about even now, and I am taking good care to keep my conquest, for I know that it will be the last'—and so on and so on. Who could guess that you are my one and only friend? If you love me as you tell me you do, you will make people believe that we are to each other as a brother and sister and nothing more.—Go on."

There was an ineffable sweetness in the way in which this charming woman arranged her robes so as to fall gracefully; it always schooled d'Arthez into obedience. A vague, subtle [illegible]nement in her discourse touched him even to tears. Other women might haggle and dispute the way inch by inch, in [illegible]-converse; the Princess rose at once above all ignoble and vulgar bargainings to a height of greatness unknown before. She had no need to utter a word, they understood their union [illegible]bly. It should be when they willed it upon either side; there was no yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow for them; there

should be none of the interminable hoisting of the pennon styled "sacrifice" by ordinary women, doubtless because they know how much they are certain to lose, while a woman who has everything to gain knows that the festival will be her day of triumph.

Diane's words had been vague as a promise, sweet as hope, and binding, nevertheless, as a pledge. Let it be admitted at once, the only women who can rise thus high are illustrious and supreme deceivers like Diane; they are queens still when other women find a lord and master. By this time d'Arthez had learned to measure the distance that separates these few from the many. The Princess was always beautiful, never wanting to herself. Perhaps the secret lies in the art with which a great lady can lay veil after veil aside, till in this position she stands like an antique statue. To retain a single shred would be indecent. The bourgeoise always tries to clothe herself.

Broken to the yoke by tenderness, and sustained by the noblest virtues, d'Arthez obediently went to Mme d'Espard's. On him she exerted her most charming coquetry. She was very careful not to mention the Princess' name; she merely asked him to dine with her at an early date.

On that day d'Arthez found a large party invited to meet him. The Marquise had asked Rastignac, Blondet, the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto, Maxime de Trailles, the Marquis d'Esgrignon, the two Vandenesses, du Tillet (one of the richest bankers in Paris), the Baron de Nucingen, Nathan, Lady Dudley, one or two of the wiliest attachés from the embassy, and the Chevalier d'Espard. The Chevalier, be it said, was one of the most astute personages in the room, and counted for a good half in the schemes of his sister-in-law.

Maxime de Trailles turned to d'Arthez.

"You see a good deal of the Princesse de Cadignan, don't you?" he asked, with a laugh.

D'Arthez replied with a stiff inclination of the head. Maxime de Trailles was a bravo of a superior order; he feared neither God nor man; he shrank from nothing. Women had

ed him, he had ruined them, and made them pledge their monds to pay his debts; but his shortcomings were covered a brilliant veneer, by charming manners, and a diabolical verness. Everybody feared him, everybody despised him; nobody was bold enough to treat him with anything short extreme civility. He could see nothing of all this, or pos- y he lent himself to the general dissimulation. De Mar- had helped him to reach the highest elevation that he d attain. De Marsay, having known Maxime from of judged him capable of fulfilling certain diplomatic tions in the secret service of which Maxime had, in fact, itted himself to admiration. D'Arthez had been mixed in political affairs for some time past; he knew enough the man to fathom his character; and he alone, it may was sufficiently high minded to say aloud what others ught.

"It is for her, no tout, dat you neklect de Chaimper," put in the Baron de Nucingen.

"Ah! a man could not set foot in the house of a more gerous woman," the Marquis d'Esgrignon exclaimed, wering his voice. "My disgraceful marriage is entirely ing to her."

"Dangerous?" repeated Mme. d'Espard. "You must not such things of my best friend. Anything that I have heard or seen of the Princess seemed to me to be mpted by the highest motives."

"Pray, let the Marquis say his say," said Rastignac. "When a man has been thrown by a mettled horse, he will faults in the animal and sell it."

The Marquis d'Esgrignon was nettled by the speech. He ed across at Daniel d'Arthez.

"Monsieur is not on such terms with the Princess that we not speak of her, I hope?"

D'Arthez was silent; and d'Esgrignon, who did not lack retorted to Rastignac with an apologetic portrait of de Cadignan. His sketch set the table in good-humor; s d'Arthez was absolutely in the dark, he bent over to e. de Montcornet and asked her to explain the joke.

"Well, judging by the good opinion that you have of the Princess, you are an exception; but all the other guests, it would seem, have been in her good graces."

"I can assure you that that view is totally false," returned Daniel.

"Yet here is M. d'Esgrignon, of a noble Perche family, who was utterly ruined for her twelve years ago, and all but went to the scaffold besides."

"I know about it," said d'Arthez. "Mme. de Cadignan rescued M. d'Esgrignon from the Assize Court, and this is how he shows his gratitude to-day."

Mme. de Montcornet stared at d'Arthez; she looked almost dazed with astonishment and curiosity. Then she glanced at Mme. d'Espard, as who should say, "He is bewitched!"

During this short conversation Mme. d'Espard had defended her friend; but her defence, after the manner of a lightning conductor, had drawn down the tempest. When d'Arthez gave his attention to the general conversation, Maxime de Trailles brought out his epigram.

"In Diane's case, depravity is not the effect but the cause; perhaps her exquisite naturalness is due to this; she does not try after studied effects; she invents nothing. She brings you out the most subtle refinements as the sudden inspiration of the most artless love; and you cannot help believing her too."

The phrase might have been prepared for a man of d'Arthez's calibre; it came out with such effect that it was like a conclusion. Nobody said any more of the Princess; she seemed to be disposed of. But d'Arthez looked first at de Trailles and then at d'Esgrignon, with a sarcastic expression.

"She took a leaf out of a man's book, that has been her greatest mistake," he said. "Like a man, she squanders marriage jewels, she sends her lovers to the money-lenders, she ruins orphans, she devours dowries, she melts down old châteaux, she inspires crimes—and perhaps commits them herself—but——"

Never in their lives had either of the two personages ad-
ssed heard language so much to the purpose. When d'Ar
came to a pause on that *but*, the whole table was dum-
nded; the spectators sat, fork in hand, looking from the
pid man of letters to the Princess' treacherous enemies.
ere was an awful pause; they waited to see what would
ne next.

"*But*," pursued d'Arthez, with satirical flippancy, "Mme
Cadignan has this one advantage over men. If any one
himself for her, she comes to the rescue, and says no
of any man afterwards. Why should not one woman,
ng so many, amuse herself with men, as men play with
n? Why should not the fair sex take a turn at that
me from time to time?——"

"Genius is more than a match for cleverness," said Blondet,
dressing Nathan.

And, indeed, d'Arthez's avalanche of epigrams was like a
y from a battery to a discharge of musketry. They
ned to change the subject. Neither the Comte de Trailles
the Marquis d'Esgrignon felt disposed to try conclusions
d'Arthez. When coffee was served, Blondet and Nathan
nt over to him with an alacrity which no one cared to imi-
, so difficult was it to reconcile admiration of his behavior
h the fear of making two powerful enemies.

"We knew before to-day that your character is as great as
r talent," said Blondet. "You bore yourself just now
like a man, but rather as a god. Not to be carried away
one's feelings or imagination, not to blunder into taking
arms in the defence of the woman one loves (as people
cted you to do), a blunder which would have meant a tri-
h for these people, for they are consumed with jealousy
elebrated men of letters—ah! permit me to say that this is
supreme height of statecraft in private life."

"You are a statesman," added Nathan. "It is as clever
is difficult to avenge a woman without defending her."

Princess is one of the heroines of the Legitimist
," d'Arthez returned coolly; "surely it is the duty of

every gentleman to champion her on those grounds? Her services to the cause would excuse the most reckless life."

"He will not show his hand," said Nathan to Blondet.

"Just as if the Princess were worth the trouble," added Rastignac, as he joined the group.

D'Arthez went to the Princess. She was waiting for him in an agony of anxiety. She had authorized an experiment which might prove fatal. For the first time in her life she suffered at heart, and a perspiration broke out over her. Others would tell d'Arthez the truth, she had told him lies; if he should believe the truth, she did not know what she should do; for a character so noble, a man so complete, a soul so pure, a conscience so ingenuous, had never passed through her hands before. It was because she longed to know a pure love that she had woven such a tissue of cruel lies. She felt that poignant love in her heart, she loved d'Arthez, and she was condemned to deceive him, for him she must always be the sublime actress who had played this comedy for his benefit. She heard d'Arthez's step in the dining-room with a great agitation; a shock quivered through the very springs of existence. Then she knew that her happiness was at stake; she had never felt such emotion before, yet hers had been a most adventurous life for a woman of her rank. With eyes gazing into space, she saw d'Arthez in one complete vision, saw through the outward form into his inmost soul. Suspicion had not so much as brushed him with her bat's wing! The reaction set in after the terrible throes of fear, and joy almost overcame Diane; for every creature is stronger to bear pain than to stand the extreme of happiness.

"Daniel!" she cried, rising to her feet and holding out her arms, "I have been slandered, and you have avenged me."

Daniel was utterly astounded by the words, for the roots of them lay far down out of his sight. He felt two beautiful hands clasp his face, and the Princess kissed him reverently on the forehead.

"How did you know?——"

, illustrious simpleton! do you not see that I love you

n that day there was no more question of the Princesse
lignan or of d'Arthez. The Princess has since inherited
roperty from her mother; she spends her summers with
at man of letters in a villa at Geneva, returning to
for a few months during the winter. D'Arthez only
himself at the Chamber. What is still more signifi-
e very rarely publishes anything.

s the catastrophe of the story? Yes, for those that
derstand, but not for people who must have everything

ACHES, *June*, 1839.

THE MIDDLE CLASSES

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE W. POWERS

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Balzac's Birthplace, rue Royale, Tours

INTRODUCTION *

Les Petits Bourgeois was left unfinished by Balzac and ap-
ared posthumously in *Le Pays*, July 26-October 28, 1854.
was issued in two parts—"Les Petits Bourgeois" and "Les
rvenus"—in 1856 and 1857 respectively, divided into
nty-seven and twenty-five chapters, since suppressed. It
tered the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne" only in the defini-
e edition. It is supposed to have been finished by Charles
ou, whom Balzac chose as the continuator of "Le Député
Arcis"; but this author's name did not appear on the title-
e of the first edition mentioned above, as it did in the case
Le Député," and it seems to be clear from Balzac's corre-
ndence that the novel was far advanced or almost com-
ed. See further on this point the body of the present
roduction. Thuillier, Colleville, Minard, Phellion, Du-
, Fleury, Godard, Laudigeois, du Bruel, Baudoyer,
lard, Rabourdin—are all names that recall "Les Em-
yés," and most of them are not seen outside these two
ks. Barbet recalls "Illusions Perdues" (see also "Un
Homme d'Affaires" and "L'Envers de l'Histoire Contem-
raine"). Cérizet was prominent in "Illusions Perdues" (see
o "Splendeurs et Misères" and "Un Homme d'Affaires").
aparon has just been encountered in "César Birotteau."
rentin is familiar from "Splendeurs et Misères"—see
Les Chouans" and "Une Ténébreuse Affaire" for his earlier
entures. Charles Crochard suggests "Une Double
mille." Desroches, Godeschal, Pierre Grassou, Lousteau,

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the Poirets, and du Tillet need no comments. La Peyrade, Lydie, and Katt recall "Splendeurs et Misères." Métivier was mentioned in "Illusions Perdues" (see also "Les Employés" and "L'Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine"). For Mme. Colleville see "Les Employés" and "La Cousine Bette"; for Vinet, "Pierrette"; for his son Olivier, "Le Député d'Arcis." Picot the astronomer, La Mère Cardinal, the Félix Phellions, Abbé Gondrin, and some other characters play no parts elsewhere. Mlle. Thuillier and some of the other women are merely mentioned or briefly described in "Les Employés," but are made no further use of.]

"Les Petits Bourgeois" is one of Balzac's least known novels, and, as M. de Lovenjoul has remarked, it is too little known. This fact is probably due in the main to the uncertainty with regard to the share in its composition to be attributed to Charles Rabou. We must therefore discuss this obscure matter before attempting to criticise the novel.

Balzac makes frequent mention in his correspondence of a story to be entitled "Les Petits Bourgeois de Paris," or more simply "Les Petits Bourgeois." In February, 1844, he is looking for a printer to set it up (*composer*). He is disgusted with the chatter of Paris with regard to his work, and will take his vengeance by writing, in *Les Débats,* his "Petits Bourgeois," from which he expects to get twenty thousand francs that will help him greatly to pay off his debts. For some days his efforts are without avail, although the printer is enchanted with the title and wishes to buy the story. A few days later he announces that he has until March 20 to correct and complete "Les Petits Bourgeois" and to do two other pieces of work. In view of the length of the novel it seems almost impossible even for the sanguine Balzac to have written thus unless a very considerable portion of his labor had been accomplished. On February 29 he writes: "I

to get the proofs of all that I have done on *Les Petits rgeois.*" Shortly after we learn that "Modeste Mignon" will be substituted in the *Débats* for "Les Petits Bourgeois," hat, as it is useless to leave a number of works tied up feuilletons," he is going to set the novel aside for . But the *Débats* has announced it, and as he writes ame, Hanska, the story is there on his desk. She knows in name the work has been done; he dares not touch it. mountain of proofs," he continues, "horrifies me, and my escape to the banks of the Neva where there are *tits Bourgeois* . . ." These sentences surely bear inference drawn above that the story was well ad- d in 1844.

rly a year later the novel is still to be finished; another d it is still before him, counted among his sure assets. frequently mentioned, but the "Poor Relations" and r works seem to push it to one side in spite of the fact the railway stocks he has been investing in have fallen . Still 1846 will be a great year for him if "Les Pay- " and "Les Petits Bourgeois" are published *coup sur coup* has the good fortune to do them well. It will be bered that the second part of "Les Paysans" did not r until 1855; the novel was, however, finished, and by . Was this the case with "Les Petits Bourgeois"?

Lovenjoul, in the third edition of his famous book, seems no definite information to give with regard to Rabou's boration. He notes, as we have seen above, that no an- ement of this collaboration was made when the novel ssued in book form, although such an announcement ade in the case of the "Député d'Arcis." He believes least "Les Petits Bourgeois" was in a much more ced stage of completion than the other novel. With opinion it is easy to agree in view of the extracts that just been made from the correspondence. It has been

urged, to be sure, that Balzac w[illegible] the habit of treating as practically finished books tha[illegible] had hardly been begun—see the Introduction to "Père Goriot"—but it must be observed that in these cases he does not speak of a mountain of proof-sheets lying on his desk. We know furthermore that he did not regard his work as done until the proof-sheets had passed through his hands an incredible number of times. Is it unreasonable, then, to conclude that when he wrote about finishing the novel he merely meant giving it a final form?

Such a question cannot well be answered categorically, and should not be answered even tentatively until we have examined the internal evidence offered by the book itself, which will doubtless seem weighty to some critics and of slight value to others. Yet, after all, ought any student of Balzac to fail to recognize the master's hand in the first half of the novel, or indeed throughout? Who else could have so handled Thuillier, and Brigitte, and Phellion, and Cérizet? Who else could have so described the old maid's hurrying others up and getting late herself, or have given us the masterly scene in which La Peyrade persuades Céleste to appear to favor their marriage? Who else could have given us Phellion's encounter with Brigitte in the interest of his son Félix? And is not Félix's apparent conversion to Christianity strictly in line with what we should expect from Balzac, and are not the manœuvres of Corentin, whether or not we care for such things, what we should expect from the author of "Ferragus" and "Splendeurs et Misères"? Even in the matter of verbal style it is difficult, at least for a foreigner, to detect Rabou's coöperation. There are indeed short paragraphs that one suspects Balzac would have amplified; yet these may represent his own first draft rather than the work of a collaborator. And to the very close of the long book there are passages that seemingly show the master's touch. It is a matter about which we cannot afford to be dogmatic, nor do

we need to deny Rabou's revision of a novel which we nevertheless may feel warranted in regarding as essentially belonging to Balzac.

But is it good enough to make it worth his admirers' while to claim it for him? To this question only one answer can be given here. "Les Petits Bourgeois" is a good enough novel to be claimed, and eagerly, for any novelist. It does not move on a high enough plane or sufficiently impress our imaginations to warrant our regarding it as equal to any of the books we have hitherto treated as Balzac's supreme masterpieces; but its plot is so interesting and elaborate and many of its characters and scenes are so admirably handled that, like "Les Paysans," it must, seemingly, be given a very high rank in the "Comedy." Its length, which it shares with most of the later written books, ought not to militate against it with English readers accustomed to the long novels of fifty years ago, and this moreover gives a not unwelcome proof that the master was capable of doing an amount of elaborate, interesting, close-knit work that indicates an almost unparalleled fecundity of genius.

With regard to the management of some of the characters there can hardly be two opinions. Thuillier, the ex-employé, eager to escape from *ennui,* his domineering sister, one of Balzac's best old maids, his yielding wife, make a bourgeois family worthy of the author of "César Birotteau" and "Pierrette." Phellion, though something of a caricature and a little suggestive of Goldsmith's immortal Dr. Primrose, is well conceived, and so are the Minards and the inconsequential Colleville. Félix Phellion and Céleste are lovers whose passion does not enthrall us, but the intrigues of La Peyrade and Cérizet are sufficiently compensating. The former is Balzac's Tartuffe just as Goriot is his Lear, and in both cases the modern writer has displayed marked originality of conception. As for Cérizet, he is a much more interesting personage than

he was in "Illusions Perdues," and now ranks among the best drawn of Balzac's shady characters. There are few scenes in the "Comedy" more interesting than that in which Cérizet and la Mère Cardinal search for Toupillier's treasure, and one is inclined to think that the ex-printer's boy could hold his own with Fraisier of "Cousin Pons," even if he cannot with the redoubtable Corentin. As to this remarkable police spy opinions may, of course, differ. Professor Wells, for example, finds him impossible, and it must be confessed that the way he continually balks La Peyrade suggests a little too strongly the extravagances we pardoned in "Ferragus." But when Professor Wells asserts that La Peyrade's unfitness to be Corentin's successor would be obvious to any child, we fear that he has gone beyond the bounds of fair criticism. La Peyrade had already shown remarkable ingenuity, both in weaving and in escaping from intrigues, and surely Corentin had reason to believe that the Provençal had had much of his hypocrisy and self-assurance driven out of him. After all it is unsafe to criticise the greatest modern student of human nature in his management of his characters.

Space is wanting for detailed comments. It must be remarked, however, that this novel, like "Albert Savarus," helps to eke out the "Scenes of Political Life," and that it also gives us fresh glimpses of the world of the journalists as well as of that of the usurers. As a study of the home life of the bourgeoisie it probably yields to no other story of the "Comedy," and in the matter of well-knit intrigue it is probably surpassed only by the "Splendeurs et Misères" and "Une Ténébreuse Affaire." It is distinctly optimistic in that its plotters fail, but it certainly lacks attractive characters. It is not especially memorable for its analysis and its descriptions —Balzac toward the last becoming more dramatic in his work —but it is needless to say that it contains striking pages that only he could have written. The curious will notice that the

periment upon the unfortunate Lydie, who by the way is presented, recalls that attempted in "Adieu." Persons reful in their reading will probably conclude that, while the eville family and the Countess de Godollo may not be gether proper company for young persons trained accord- to Anglo-Saxon ideas, the novel as a whole is remarkably from what may be called the pervading blemish of French tion.

W. P. TRENT.

THE MIDDLE CLASSES

To Constance-Victoire.

This, madame, is one of those works which come into an author's mind, he knows not whence, and affords him pleasure before he can estimate how it will be welcomed by the public, the supreme judge of the day. Feeling assured of your indulgence with my infatuation, to you I dedicate this book: is it not right that it should be yours as in other days tithes belonged to the church, in memory of God who makes all things grow, all ripen, both in the fields and in our intellects?

Some lumps of clay, left by Molière at the base of the colossal statue of Tartuffe, have been moulded by a hand more audacious than skilful: but, at whatever distance I may be beneath the greatest of humorists, I shall be satisfied to have utilized these little pieces scattered from before the curtain of his stage to show up the modern hypocrite at work. What most encouraged me in this difficult undertaking was finding it unconnected with any religious question, which for you, so pious, I must necessarily avoid, aside from what a great writer calls *the general indifference to religious matters.*

May the double meaning of your names be a prophecy of the success! Be pleased to regard this as a respectful recognition by one who ventures to call himself the most devoted of your servants.

De Balzac.

PART I.

THE turnstile Saint-Jean, of which a description seemed unnecessary at the time of the commencement of the Study entitled "A Double Family," is a primitive relic of old Paris no longer in existence but in that story. The erection of the Hôtel de Ville, as it stands to-day, has cleared out the whole quarter.

In 1830 passers-by could still see the turnstile painted on the sign of a wine-dealer, but that house, its last sanctuary, has since been torn down. Alas! old Paris is vanishing with frightful rapidity. Here and there, in these works, there will remain some typical house of the Middle Ages, like that described at the opening of the "Cat and Racket." One or two such specimens still exist; for instance, the house occupied by Judge Popinot, Rue du Fouarre, is an example of old bourgeoise dwellings. Here, the remains of the Fulbert house; there, the old basin of the Seine during the reign of Charles IX. Why does not some historian of French society, like a new "Old Mortality," search out these singular records of the past as the old man of Walter Scott repaired the tombstones? Certainly, for nearly ten years, the protests of literature have not been superfluous; art is beginning to hide with its flowers the hideous fronts of the trading-marts in Paris, which one of our writers has jocosely compared to *commodes*.

It may be remarked here that the creation of a municipal commission *del ornamento* which supervises, in Milan, the architecture of the street-fronts, and which compels every proprietor to submit his plans thereto, dates from the twelfth century. Now who can have failed to note in that pretty capital the effects of patriotism for their town alike in the middle-class and the nobles, and to admire buildings noted for their character and originality?

The startling and hideous spirit of speculation which, year after year, crowds a suite of rooms into the space of a salon,

ging war to the death against the city gardens, must in-
ably influence the manners of Parisians. Before long we
be compelled to live out of our houses more than in
. The sanctity of private life, the liberty of the home,
ere can it be found? It requires an income of fifty thou-
. francs to support them. Indeed even few millionaires
t themselves the luxury of a little mansion, protected
courtyard from the street, and sheltered from the prying
of the public by the leafy shade of a garden.

By leveling all fortunes, the Code which regulates the suc-
ons, or legacies, has produced those stuccoed phalan-
es in which lodge thirty families, bringing in one hun-
d thousand francs a year. Thus, in fifty years we shall
able to count the houses resembling that occupied by the
illier family at the time we begin this story; really a
s house and well deserving of a detailed description, if
for the purpose of comparing the middle-class lives of
r days with those of our own time.

The situation and appearance of the house, the frame to
picture of manners, has the imprint, the aroma, of the
r middle-class life, which may attract or repulse atten-
according to one's inclination.

In the first place, the Maison Thuillier did not belong
ther M. or Mme., but to Mademoiselle Thuillier, the
st sister of M. Thuillier.

This house, purchased by Mlle. Jeanne-Brigitte Thuillier,
ster, in the first six months following the revolution of
, is situated near the middle of the Rue Saint-Domi-
e-d'Enfer, to the right on entering by the Rue d'Enfer.
s the house occupied by M. Thuillier has a southern ex-
re.

The progressive movement of the Parisian populace toward
higher ground on the right bank of the river Seine, de-
ting the left bank, had for a long time prevented the sale
roperties in the Latin quarter, so-called, which, for vari-
reasons, which will be deduced from the character and
bits of M. Thuillier, determined his sister to purchase a

freehold. This one she was able to buy for the merely nominal price of forty-six thousand francs; the fixtures and so forth amounted to six thousand additional, or fifty-two thousand francs in all. A detailed description of the estate, in the style of an advertisement, and the changes made by M. Thuillier, will fully show the way in which some fortunes were made in July, 1830, while others lost their all.

On the street the front was of stucco masonry, weather beaten and rain-furrowed, and grooved by the plasterer's tool in imitation of blocks of stone. This kind of house-front is so common in Paris, and so ugly, that the town ought to give prizes to owners who are willing to build their new façades of carved stone. This drab wall, pierced by seven windows, was raised three storeys, and terminated in a mansard roof covered with tiles. The carriage gate, wide and strong, showed in make and style that the part of the building toward the street had been erected during the Empire, one part of the courtyard utilized having formerly formed part of a very large, older habitation, surviving from the time when the Enfer quarter enjoyed more favor.

On one side was the janitor's lodge; on the other the stairs went up the front. Two wings, adjoining the neighboring houses, had formerly served as the stables, coach-house, kitchens, and servants' quarters; but, since 1830, these had been converted into warehouses.

The right side was rented by a wholesale stationer, called M. Métivier *nephew;* the left side by a bookseller named Barbet. The offices of each tradesman were over the warerooms, the bookseller being on the second and the stationer on the third floor of the house on the street. Métivier *nephew*, more a commission agent for paper than a merchant; Barbet, more a bill-broker than a bookseller, had one of these extensive premises in use for storing job lots of paper bought from necessitous manufacturers; the other of editions of works given as pledges for loans.

This shark of the booksellers and this pike of the paper trade lived on good terms with each other, and their transac-

[illegible], having none of the bustle or energies of retail trade, [illegible]ght so few carriages into that habitually quiet courtyard [illegible] janitor was compelled to weed out the grass now and [illegible] from between the paving-stones. MM. Barbet and [illegible]er, who act but a minor part in this story, made but [illegible]sits to their landlord, and their promptness in paying [illegible] rent caused them to be classed as good tenants; they [illegible] regarded as very honest people in the eyes of the Thuil-[illegible]rele.

[illegible] the third floor on the street side were two suites of [illegible], one occupied by M. Dutocq, clerk to a justice of the [illegible], an old, retired government employé, a frequenter of [illegible] Thuilliers' salon; the other by the hero of this story. [illegible] must be content for the present, however, to know what [illegible] paid—seven hundred francs—and the position he had [illegible]n the heart of the place, three years previous to the [illegible]n rising on this domestic drama.

[illegible] clerk, a bachelor of fifty, occupied the largest of the [illegible]ites; he had a cook, and paid a rent of one thousand [illegible] Two years after her acquisition, Mademoiselle Thuil-[illegible] was getting seven thousand francs in rent for one house. [illegible] former owner had furnished it with outside shutters, had [illegible]d the interior, ornamenting it with mirrors, without [illegible]eding in either letting or selling it; and the Thuilliers, [illegible] handsomely lodged, as will be seen, had the enjoyment of [illegible] of the most beautiful gardens in the quarter, whose trees [illegible]d the deserted little street, the Rue Neuve-Sainte-[illegible]rine.

Situated between the courtyard and the garden, that part [illegible] house which they occupied seemed to have been built [illegible]tify the caprice of some wealthy citizen in the days of [illegible] XIV., or that of a president of the Parlement, or of [illegible] quiet, peace-loving student. There was in the fine cut [illegible], weather-beaten by time, a certain Louis Quatorzième [illegible]leur (if this barbarism may be permitted); the paneling [illegible]d brick recalled the stable at Versailles: the arched [illegible]dows were ornamented with grotesque figures on the key-

stone and under the sill; the door, with small squares of glass in the upper part, through which the garden could be seen, was of the unpretending style often used in the porters' lodges of royal abodes. This lodge had five windows, and was of two storeys above the first floor, being prettily capped with a four-gabled roof, ending in a weathercock, pierced by handsome, large chimneys and oval windows. Perhaps this structure was built from the remains of some great mansion; but, after studying the plans of old Paris, I have been unable to find anything to substantiate this theory; and, for that matter, the title deeds of Mlle. Thuillier mention as proprietor, under Louis XIV., one Petitot, the famous enamel painter, he having it from President Lecamus. It is probable that the president lived here during the erection of his celebrated mansion on the Rue de Thorigny.

Thus the Robe and Art had alike left their traces. But, then, what a liberal idea of necessity and pleasure had ruled in the arrangements of the interior of this lodge! To the right, on entering the hall, was a spacious vestibule, whence ascended a stairway of stone, with two windows overlooking the garden; under the stairs was the doorway to the cellar. The vestibule led to the dining-room, with windows to the courtyard. This dining-room had a side-door opening to the kitchens adjoining Barbet's warehouse. At the back of the stairs on the garden side was a fine, large study, with two windows. The first and second storeys each formed a separate set of two suites of rooms; and the servants' quarters were indicated, under the four-gabled roof, by the oval windows. A handsome, large stove ornamented the great vestibule; its two glass doors, facing each other, gave ample light. This hall was paved in black and white marble, and had a decorated coffered ceiling, the joists of which had at one time been painted and gilded, but which had, since the Empire, undoubtedly been whitewashed. Facing the stove was a red marble basin. The three doors of the study, the salon, and the dining-room were surmounted with oval panels containing pictures which cried aloud for much-needed restoration, though the decorations were not without merit.

The salon, wainscoted in wood, recalled the century of magnificence by its Languedoc marble mantel, by its ceiling with ornamented cornices, and by the shape of its windows, in which were preserved the little diamond panes. The dining-room, level with the salon and having double doors between, was floored with marble; the ceiling of chestnut-wood was unpainted; but the atrocious modern paper-hangings had replaced the tapestry of the olden time. The study, modernized by Thuillier, was now utterly discordant.

The gold and white panels of the salon were so faded that nothing but red lines could be perceived where the gold had formerly been, and the white was yellow, streaky, and falling off. The Latin words, *Otium cum dignitate,* had never, to the eyes of a poet, had so excellent a commentary as in this noble dwelling. The iron-work of the balustrade to the stairs was worthy the magistrate and the artist; but, to discern their traces to-day in the remains of a dignified antiquity, the observing eye of the artist was necessary.

The Thuilliers and their predecessors had much dishonored this gem of the higher bourgeoisie by their middle-class habits and lack of taste. Imagine walnut-wood chairs with horse-hair seats; a mahogany table with an oilcloth cover; a crumb-cloth under the table; lamps of black metal; a cheap paper with a red border; execrable black and white engravings on the walls; and cotton curtains with red borders in this dining-room in which Petitot and his friends had feasted!

Can you conceive of the effect of this in the salon where hung the portraits of M., of Mme., of Mlle. Thuillier, by Pierre Grassou, the painter of the middle-classes; of card-tables that had done twenty years' service; of consoles of the time of the Empire; a tea-table supported on a huge lyre; of a coarse mahogany suite upholstered in printed velvet on a chocolate ground; of the mantel, with its clock which represented la Bellone of the Empire; of candelabra with fluted columns; of curtains of worsted damask and of embroidered lace, looped back with stamped brass chains? A second-hand carpet covered the floor. The handsome vestibule was fur-

nished with benches covered with plush, the carved panels being hidden behind wardrobes of divers dates, which had been brought from the various apartments formerly occupied by the Thuilliers. A shelf covered the marble basin bearing a smoky lamp dating from 1815. As a finishing touch, fear, that hideous bugbear, had provided, both on the garden and the courtyard sides of the house, double doors strongly sheathed in iron, which stood back against the wall by day and at night were securely closed.

It is an easy matter to explain the deplorable desecration of this monument of the family life of the seventeenth century by the same life of the nineteenth century. At the commencement of the Consulate, perhaps, some master-builder, having acquired this little mansion, conceived the idea of making some use of the ground facing the street; he had most likely pulled down a beautiful coach-way gate flanked by little lodges which added importance to this pretty *séjour,* to use an old French word, and the shrewdness of a Parisian builder implanted its blight on the front of this elegance; as the newspapers and their printing-presses, the factories and their warerooms, trade and its counting-rooms, have ousted the aristocracy, the old bourgeoisie, finance and the law, wherever they once displayed their splendor. A curious study is that of the title-deeds in Paris! A mad-house, on the Rue des Batailles, occupies the site where once stood the dwelling of the Chevalier Pierre Bayard du Terrail; the "third estate" has built a whole street where once stood the Hôtel Necker. Old Paris is going—following the kings who are gone. For one *chef d'œuvre* of architecture saved by a Polish princess,* how many smaller palaces have fallen, like Petitot's dwelling, into the hands of Thuilliers. Here are the reasons which led Mademoiselle Thuillier to become the owner of this house:

At the fall of the Villèle ministry M. Louis-Jérôme Thuillier, who had then been for twenty-six years a clerk in the Bureau of Finance, became second clerk; but he had barely

* The Hôtel Lambert, Ile Saint-Louis, occupied by the Princess Czartoriska. [Note in original edition.]

had his fill of the joys of authority in that subaltern position, once the smallest of his hopes, when the events of July, 1830, compelled him to resign. He very ingeniously calculated that his pension would be honorably and munificently dealt with by the new men, who would be only too well pleased to have the disposal of another place at their command; and this was well reasoned, for it was at once granted at seventeen hundred francs.

When the prudent sub-chief first spoke of retiring from the administration, his sister, far more the partner of his life than was his wife, trembled for the employé's future.

"What would become of Thuillier?" was the question Madame and Mademoiselle Thuillier addressed to each other with equal fears; they were then living in a small flat on the third floor, Rue d'Argenteuil.

"Getting his pension into proper shape will occupy him for some time," said Mlle. Thuillier; "but I think I will so place my savings as to keep him pretty well occupied. Yes, by giving him an estate to manage it will be almost equal to his being in the service."

"Oh! my dear sister, you will save his life!" cried Mme. Thuillier.

"Well, I have always foreseen this crisis in Jérôme's life!" replied the old maid, with an air of patronage.

Mlle. Thuillier had too frequently heard her brother remark: "Such-a-one is dead; he only survived two years after he retired!" She well remembered hearing Colleville, Thuillier's intimate friend, employed in the same office, jesting about the climacteric of bureaucracy, and saying: "We shall some time come to it the same as the rest!" not to realize the danger threatening her brother. The transition from activity to idleness is, in fact, the critical time for the employé. Those who cannot substitute some other occupation for the one they have left change remarkably: some die; a [illegible] number take to fishing, a distraction very akin to their former labors in the office; some others, malicious men, become stock-brokers, lose their savings in the concern, and are

glad to finish by taking a situation in the business, after the first bankruptcy and liquidation, which becomes successful in the hands of more capable ones on the lookout for just such chances; then the ex-clerk can rub his now empty hands and say: "I always knew there was a great future for this business." But most of them keep up a constant struggle against their old habits.

"Some of them," said Colleville, "are devoured by a spleen"* (he pronounced it "splane") "peculiar to government clerks; they die of suppressed *circula(r)tion;* afflicted with red-tape worm. The little Poiret could not see a blue-bordered cardboard box without his face changing color; he turned from green to yellow."

Mlle. Thuillier was looked upon as the good genius of her brother's household; that she had plenty of force and decision her personal story will demonstrate. This relative superiority enabled her to gauge her brother, though she adored him. After seeing the wreck of the hopes founded on her idol, even her motherly feeling did not lead her to overestimate the social qualities of the sub-chief.

Thuillier and his sister were the children of the head porter to the Minister of Finance. Jérôme had escaped, thanks to his being short-sighted, from every possible form of requisition and conscription. His father's ambition was to make him an employé. At the opening of this century there were so many places to fill in the army that it caused many vacancies in the offices, thus the removal of inferior clerks gave the burly old Thuillier a chance to see his son take his first decrees in the hierarchy of bureaucracy.

The porter died in 1814, at the time when Jérôme was to succeed the old sub-chief, but all the fortune he was able to leave him was this hope. Old Thuillier and his wife, who died in 1810, had retired in 1806, with a retiring pension their sole fortune, having expended their earnings in giving Jérôme his education and in supporting him and his sister.

We know the effect of the Restoration on the bureaux.

* Blue Devils.

The suppression of forty-one departments caused the dismissal of a horde of clerks, honest men quite prepared to accept offices inferior in grade to those formerly occupied by them. To the claim of these men were further added the pretensions of exiled families ruined by the Revolution. Between these two elements Jérôme thought himself more than lucky not to be dismissed on some frivolous pretext. Till the day when by chance he became second-clerk he had trembled about his retiring pension.

This short review explains M. Thuillier's limited conceptions and lack of general knowledge. He had acquired the Latin, mathematics, history, and geography, that boys are taught at school; but he had not risen higher than what is known as the second class, his father having profited by the chance of getting him into office, boasting of his son's "splendid hand." So, though little Thuillier wrote the first inscriptions in the ledger of his office, he was not up in rhetoric or philosophy.

A cogwheel in the ministerial machine, he cultivated letters but little and troubled art still less; he acquired a superficial knowledge of the routine of his duties; and when, on the occasion of his rise, under the Empire, he mixed with the higher class of employés, he caught the superficial manner which concealed the porter's son, but he utterly failed to catch a ready wit. His ignorance warned him to be silent, and his silence well served him. He was accustomed to render, under the Imperial régime, that passive obedience which is so appreciated by superiors; and it was to this quality that he afterward owed his promotion to the grade of sub-chief. This routine life gave him a great experience; his silent manner covered his lack of education. These negative qualities were a great recommendation when a cipher was needed. There was danger of displeasing both parties in the Chamber when each had a favorite, and the Ministry were relieved from their embarrassment by falling back upon the rule of seniority in service. That was how Thuillier became sub-chief.

Mlle. Thuillier, knowing how her brother abhorred reading

and his inability to replace the tasks of the office by any business, had wisely resolved to give him the care of her property, the culture of the garden, the little trivialities of middle-class life found in the intrigues of the neighborhood.

The transplanting of the Thuillier household from the Rue d'Argenteuil to the Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer, the attention necessary to the purchase, the selection of a janitor, the search for good tenants, kept Thuillier fully occupied through 1831 and 1832. When this phenomenal transplantation was effected, when the sister saw that Jérôme had survived his uprooting, she found him still other employment, as we shall learn, for she recognized a similar disposition to her own in Thuillier, which it may not be useless to here describe.

Although only the son of a minister's porter, Thuillier was what is known as a fine man; above the medium height, slight, of agreeable physiognomy when he wore his spectacles, but ugly, like most persons afflicted with myopia, when he doffed them; for the habit of looking through glasses had cast a species of mist over his eyeballs.

Between the age of eighteen and thirty, young Thuillier was a favorite with women in the social sphere of the lower middle-class which ends below the chiefs of the departments; but, as all are aware, under the Empire the wars left Parisian society somewhat bereft by absorbing every man of energy into the fields of battle; and perhaps, as suggested by a celebrated physician, this is the cause of the decadence of the generation that lived during the middle of the nineteenth century.

Thuillier, compelled to shine by accomplishments other than intellectual, learned to waltz and dance so well as to become noted for it in the city; he was called "Handsome Thuillier"; he was an expert billiard player; he was clever at cutting out paper figures; his friend Colleville had so well instructed him that he could troll out some fashionable ballads in great style. All this resulted in gaining him that spurious success which deceives the young and deludes them as to the future. From 1806 to 1814 Mlle. Thuillier believed in her brother as Mlle. d'Orleans believed in Louis-Philippe; she

was proud of Jérôme, she saw him arrive at the highest post in the office; thanks to the popularity which at that time gave him the entrance to some salons where he most decidedly would not have been seen but for the circumstances which, under the Empire, made society a perfect medley.

He retained a habit of looking at himself in the glass, posing with his hands on his hips to set off his figure, and assuming the deportment of a dancing-master, all of which helped to prolong, beyond the pleasure he derived from it, the lease of his nickname "Handsome Thuillier." But the triumphs of the handsome Thuillier were generally of short duration. The women were as fickle to him as he was to them. He would have been a good subject for a comedy entitled "Don Juan in Spite of Himself." This rôle of beau wearied Thuillier, and made him grow old. His face covered with wrinkles like that of an old coquette, added a dozen years to his appearance.

But the truth in 1806 became mockery in 1826. He still retained some vestiges of the dandy's dress of the Empire, nor were they unbecoming to the dignity of an old second-clerk. He still wore the white cravat with numerous pleats in which his chin was buried, the two ends of which menaced passers-by as they projected to the right and left of a neatly tied knot, in former days fastened by the hands of dainty beauties. He followed the fashions at a respectful distance, but he adapted them to his own style; he wore his hat far back; low shoes in summer with fine stockings; his overcoat was reminiscent of the *évites* of the Empire; he would not abandon his pleated shirt-frills and white waistcoats; he was all the time playing with his slender cane, the style of 1810, and held himself upright. None who saw Thuillier promenading the boulevards would have taken him for the son of a man who served the employés' breakfasts in the Bureau of Finance, and who wore the livery of Louis XVI.; he more resembled an imperial diplomat or a sub-prefect.

Now, not only did Mademoiselle Thuillier innocently encourage in her brother this excessive care of his person, which

was in keeping with her adoration of him, but she procured for him all the pleasures of family life by transplanting near them a family whose life had run almost parallel with their own. This was the family of M. Colleville, Thuillier's most intimate friend. But before painting Pylades it is first indispensable to have done with Orestes, as it is necessary to explain why Thuillier, Handsome Thuillier, found himself without a family, for without children a family cannot be; and here must be revealed one of those deep mysteries which lie entombed in the arcana of private life, and whose symptoms arise at times to the surface when the anguish of a hidden sorrow becomes too great to be silently borne, as instance that of Mme. and Mlle. Thuillier, for, up to the present, we have only seen, so to speak, the public life of Jérôme Thuillier.

Marie-Jeanne-Brigitte Thuillier, four years older than her brother, had been completely sacrificed to his interests; it was easier to give one a profession than to give the other a marriage-portion. Ill-fortune, to certain natures, is a lighthouse illuminating the dark and squalid in social life. Superior to her brother, alike in energy and common sense, Brigitte possessed a nature which the sledge-hammer of persecution had made dense, compact, and of great resistance, not to say inflexible. Jealous of her independence, she made up her mind, by some means, to leave behind her the life at the porter's lodge and become the sole arbiter of her fate.

At fourteen years of age she took up her abode in a garret, some few steps from the Treasury, then in the Rue Vivienne, not far from the Rue de la Vrillière, where to-day the Bank stands. She bravely started out in an unfamiliar business, privileged, thanks to her father's patrons, and which consisted of manufacturing cash-bags for the Bank, the Treasury, and other great banking houses. She had, at the end of three years, two workwomen employed. Placing her savings in the Funds, by 1814 she had an income of three thousand six hundred francs a year, which had been made in fifteen years. She spent but little, dining every day with her

father as long as he lived. Now, as all know, the Funds during the last convulsions of the Empire went down to forty-odd francs—so this result, apparently exaggerated, is easily explained.

On the death of the old porter, Brigitte and Jérôme, one aged twenty-seven, the other twenty-three, united their destinies. The brother and sister had the fullest affection for each other. So when Jérôme, then in the time of his success, needed any money, his sister, dressed in coarse woolen cloth, her fingers showing the wear of the thread with which she sewed, always had a few louis to offer him. In Brigitte's eyes Jérôme was the most handsome and most charming man in the whole French Empire.

To keep house for this adored brother, to be initiated into the secrets of Lindoro and Don Juan, to be his servant, his faithful spaniel, was Brigitte's ideal dream; she immolated herself with ardor to an idol whose egoism she could aggrandize by her sacrifice. She sold her business to her forewoman for fifteen thousand francs, then went and established herself in the Rue d'Argenteuil with Thuillier, making herself the mother, protector, slave, of that "darling of the ladies."

Brigitte, with the natural prudence of a maid who owed her all to her own discretion and toil, hid the extent of her fortune from her brother; she no doubt was afraid of the prodigalities of such a man of the world, and brought to the common stock but six hundred francs; this, though, with the eighteen hundred of Jérôme's, enabled her to make both ends meet each year.

From the first day of their partnership, Thuillier listened to his sister as to an oracle; he consulted her in the smallest affairs, concealed no secrets from her, and thus gave her a taste of the fruits of domination which became the besetting sin of her nature. But, really, the sister had completely sacrificed herself to her brother, she had taken his interests to her heart, she lived but in him. Brigitte's ascendency over Jérôme was singularly confirmed by the marriage she procured for him about 1814.

Seeing the greedy grasp of the newcomers, which came with the Restoration, upon all the government offices, and particularly in the return of the old society which trampled under foot the middle-classes, Brigitte understood, and indeed her brother explained to her, the social crisis that bade fair to extinguish all their hopes. Further success was out of the question for Handsome Thuillier among the nobility who had succeeded in routing the plebeians of the Empire.

Under these conditions a woman, as zealous as Brigitte was, wished and determined to have her brother marry, quite as much for her own sake as for his; for only she could make him happy, a Madame Thuillier being merely the indispensable accessory for the production of one or two children. Though Brigitte's intellect did not compare with her will, she had the instinct of despotism; for though she had received no education, she went straight ahead with the persistency of a nature accustomed to succeed. She had a natural genius for household management, the sense of thrift, and a love of work. She divined that she would never be successful in marrying Jérôme in a higher sphere than their own, where the family would make inquiry as to their style of life, possibly to be alarmed at finding a mistress already established in the dwelling; she searched, therefore, in a grade below their own for the people she might dazzle, and she came across the very party.

The senior messenger of the Bank, named Lemprun, had an only daughter called Céleste. Mlle. Céleste Lemprun would inherit the fortune of her mother, the only daughter of a truck-farmer. This property consisted of some acres of land in the environs of Paris which the old man still worked; then the fortune of old Lemprun, a man who, after being employed in the banks of Thélusson and Keller, had entered the service of the Bank at its foundation, would also be hers. Lemprun, then the head messenger, enjoyed the respect and esteem of the government and the inspectors.

The Board of Directors, hearing that the marriage of Céleste to an honorable employé in the Bureau of Finance

was arranged, promised a present of six thousand francs; [illegible] gift, added to the twelve thousand francs given by old Lemprun, and twelve thousand francs given by Sieur Galard, the truck-farmer at Auteuil, made a *dot* of thirty thousand francs. Old Galard and M. and Mme. Lemprun were enchanted with this alliance; the chief messenger knew Brigitte for one of the most worthy and respectable women in Paris. Brigitte gave brilliant descriptions of her investments in the Funds, and informed the Lempruns that she would never marry, and neither the chief messenger nor his wife, people of the Golden Age, allowed themselves to criticise Brigitte. They were especially struck by the high position of Handsome Thuillier, and the marriage had taken place, to use the accustomed formula, to the general satisfaction.

The governor and secretary of the Bank acted as witnesses for the bride, as M. de la Billardière, chief of his department, and M. Rabourdin, chief of the bureau, did for Thuillier.

Six days after this marriage old Lemprun was the victim of a most audacious robbery, spoken of in the journals of the time, but soon forgotten in the events of 1815. The thieves had completely eluded every search. Lemprun wished to pay for the loss, and, although the Bank charged the amount to profit and loss, the poor old man died of vexation caused by the disaster. He regarded it as a blow at his probity of seventy years' standing.

Mme. Lemprun abandoned all her inheritance to her daughter, Mme. Thuillier, and went to live with her father at Auteuil, where the old man died of an accident in 1817. Afraid of either managing or letting her father's fields, Mme. Lemprun begged Brigitte, at whose capabilities and [illegible]ty she was astonished, to realize the estate of old Galard and so arrange things that her daughter should take everything, allowing her fifteen hundred francs a year and leaving her house at Auteuil. The fields of the old truck-farmer, sold in lots, brought thirty thousand francs, and the two

fortunes, added to the *dot*, amounted in 1818 to ninety thousand francs.

At the beginning of that year, with the results of operations on 'Change, Thuillier's salary, and the dividend on Bank shares, the annual sum passing through Brigitte's uncontrolled hands amounted to eleven thousand francs. It is necessary to have this financial question understood not only to remove difficulties, but to leave a clear course for the drama.

In the first place Brigitte allowed her brother five hundred francs a month, and managed affairs so that five thousand francs defrayed the household expenses. She allowed her sister-in-law fifty francs a month, declaring that she herself would be satisfied with forty. To render herself supreme through the power of money, Brigitte laid by the surplus of her own income; she loaned money through the agency of her brother, who passed for a broker. If from 1813 to 1830 Brigitte had accumulated a capital of sixty thousand francs, this can be explained by her transactions in stocks, without having recourse to charges more or less well founded, the truth of which would add nothing to the interest of this story.

From the very first Brigitte broke in the unfortunate Mme. Thuillier by a free use of the spurs and making her feel the curb. This luxury of tyranny was quite useless; the victim promptly yielded. Céleste had been sized up by Brigitte, who found her devoid of pluck and education, accustomed to a sedentary life, a tranquil atmosphere, and of excessively mild nature; she was pious in the fullest sense of the word; she had expiated by hard penance each involuntary fault that could cause pain to another. She was quite ignorant of life; accustomed to be waited upon by her mother, who did her own housework; compelled to keep in a state of rest by a lymphatic constitution, becoming fatigued at the least exertion. She was truly a daughter of the people of Paris, where the children, rarely pretty, are the production of poverty, overwork, of airless homes, without freedom of action, and the lack of every convenience of life.

At the time of her wedding Céleste was a little woman, a [illegible] blonde, nauseatingly so; fat, slow, and of most stupid [illegible]earance. Her too-large prominent forehead suggested [illegible] on the brain; and under that dome of a waxy hue [illegible] evidently too small and ending in a point like the [illegible] of a mouse, suggested the fear that at some time she [illegible]ld lose her mind. Her pale blue eyes, and lips set in a [illegible] smile, did not disabuse one of this idea. She had, on [illegible] solemn day of her wedding, the attitude, air, and manner [illegible] condemned to death, and who hopes it will soon be [illegible]

"She's a bit soft!" said Colleville to Thuillier.

Brigitte was the knife that should stab this nature, which presented so violent a contrast to her own. She possessed a sort of beauty in her correct, regular features, but it had been defaced by toil which, from infancy, had bound her hard down to uncongenial, rough work, and by the secret privations she had voluntarily undergone to increase her competency. Her dappled skin had the hue of steel. Her brown eyes were surrounded with black, or, rather, livid circles; her upper lip was ornamented with dark down, as though it had been smoked; she had thin lips, and her imperious forehead had once been crowned with hair that was black, but which was now changing to chinchilla. She was as erect as any handsome woman, but everything about her betrayed a life of toil, suppressed fires, and, as is said of sheriffs, "the cost of her achievements."

To Brigitte, Céleste was but a fortune to pick up, a prospective mother, one subject more in her empire. She very soon reproached her for being "flabby"—a constant word of hers—and this jealous old maid, who would have despaired if she had found a managing sister-in-law, took a savage delight in stinging this feeble creature into activity. Céleste, ashamed of seeing her sister-in-law display such vim and energy in her household duties, made an effort to assist her: she fell ill; at once Brigitte gave her whole care to Mme. Thuillier, she nursed her like a sister, saying before [illegible]:

"You are not strong enough; eh, well, do nothing, my pet!" She made the most of the incapacity of Céleste with that display of pity by which the strong, pretending much compassion for the weak, manage to eulogize their own merits.

When Mme. Thuillier's health was reëstablished, Brigitte would say, in such manner that none could help hearing: "Dish-rag, good-for-nothing," and the like. Céleste would weep in her own room, and when Thuillier surprised her in tears, he excused his sister, saying:

"She's all right, but she's hot-tempered; she loves you in her way; she is just the same with me."

Céleste, remembering the maternal care she had received, forgave her sister-in-law. Brigitte looked upon her brother as king of the house; she lauded him to Céleste, and treated him as an autocrat, a Ladislas, an infallible pope. Mme. Thuillier, bereft of her father and grandfather, and all but abandoned by her mother, who came on Thursdays to see her, while they visited her on Sundays in the summer, had no one but her husband to love; first, because he was her husband, and also because he remained to her Handsome Thuillier; and sometimes he really treated her as though she were his wife. All these reasons combined caused her to worship him. Now Thuillier dined at home, but went to bed very late; he went to balls in his own circle alone, precisely the same as though he were a bachelor. Thus the two women were always together.

Céleste assumed a passive attitude, and, agreeable to Brigitte's desire, became a regular slave. The Queen Elizabeth of the household passed from despotism to a sort of pity for this perpetually sacrificed victim. Finally she laid aside her high and mighty airs, her stinging words, her tone of contempt, when she was assured that she had broken her sister into passive slavery.

The poor creature might have become something in the household that lived upon her money—though she was unaware of the fact; but all she obtained were the crumbs that

fell from the table. She had one chance by which her spirit might have been roused to defend herself, to be something, but, alas! that chance did not come to her.

Six years had gone, but Céleste had borne no child. This ill fortune, which, month after month, caused her torrents of tears, for a long time but added fuel to Brigitte's flame; she reproached her for being no good at all, not even to bear children. This old maid, who had promised herself the pleasure of loving her brother's child, was slow in becoming used to the idea that this disappointment was irremediable.

At the time when this story commences, in 1840, at the age of forty-six, Céleste had stopped crying, for she was mournfully certain that the power of becoming a mother had departed. Time, ample means, the incessant little frictions of daily life, had rubbed off the corners, and that, together with Céleste's lamblike resignation and sweetness, led to a serene autumn. Brigitte became as fond of Céleste as she was of her. And the two women were further united by the strongest sentiment they had ever known—their adoration for the happy and selfish Thuillier.

This spurious motherhood, quite as absorbing as the real, needs an explanation which brings us to the heart of the drama and is the reason why Mlle. Thuillier found plenty of occupation for her brother.

Thuillier had entered as a supernumerary in the bureau at the same time as Colleville, who has already been spoken of as his intimate friend. Compared to the dull and rigid household of Thuillier's, social nature had formed Colleville's as a perfect contrast, and though it was impossible that this peculiar contrast should be moral, it needs to be added that before jumping to a conclusion, it were as well to read the story (unfortunately, only too true) to the end,—for the outcome of which the author cannot be held responsible.

This Colleville was the only son of a talented musician, formerly the first violin at the opera during Francœur's and Rebel's time. At least six times a month, during his life,

he related anecdotes of the representation of the *Devin du Village* and imitated Jean-Jacques Rousseau wonderfully. Colleville and Thuillier were inseparable friends, having no secrets from each other; their friendship, commenced when they were but fifteen, remained cloudless in the year 1839.

Colleville, besides being an employé, was what was known as a "Cumulator" in the bureau; he was first clarionet at the Opera-Comique—thanks to his father's name. Now, when a bachelor, he was better off than Thuillier, and often shared with his friend. But, in contrast to Thuillier, Colleville married, to please himself, Mlle. Flavie, natural daughter of a celebrated dancer who pretended that her child was a de Bourguier, one of the richest contractors of his day, but who had been ruined in 1800, and who more completely forgot his child, as he cherished doubts as to the faithfulness of this famous comédienne.

By her appearance and birth Flavie was destined to a grievous fate at the time when Colleville, who had frequent occasion to visit her mother, who had lived luxuriously, fell in love with Flavie and married her. Prince Galathionne, the illustrious dancer's protector, in September, 1815, when she was bringing her brilliant career to a close, gave Flavie twenty thousand francs as a wedding-present, and her mother added a most elaborate trousseau. The frequenters of her house and her comrades at the opera made her presents of jewelry and plate, so that the Colleville household was much richer in superfluities than cash. Flavie, raised in luxury, at first had a charming suite of rooms which had been furnished by her mother's decorator, and where the young wife held court, airing her taste for the arts, artists, and for a certain elegance.

Mme. Colleville was at once pretty and piquante, bright, gay, gracious, and an exemplar of the term—"a jolly good fellow." The dancer, now aged forty-three, retired from the stage and went to live in the country, which deprived her daughter of the benefit to be derived from her mother's luxury and extravagance. Mme. Colleville's house was very

pleasant, but very expensive. Between 1816 and 1826 she had five children. A musician in the evening, from seven to nine in the morning Colleville kept the books of a merchant. By ten o'clock he was at the bureau. Thus by blowing into a wooden pipe in the evening, and writing out accounts in double entry in the morning, he made seven to eight thousand francs per annum.

Mme. Colleville played the lady of high society; she received on Wednesdays; she gave a musicale each month, and a dinner every fortnight. She saw Colleville only at dinner in the evening; when he returned toward midnight, she very often had not yet come in. She was at the play, for she often had a box given her, or she would leave word for Colleville to call for her at some house where she was at a dance or a supper. Excellent fare was provided by Mme. Colleville, and her society, somewhat mixed, was excessively amusing; she received famous actresses, painters, men of letters, and some wealthy men. Mme. Colleville's elegance was on a par with that of Tullia, the operatic premier danseuse, of whom she saw a great deal; but, though the Collevilles drew upon their capital, often finding it difficult to make both ends meet at the month's end, Flavie was never in debt.

Colleville was very happy; he still loved his wife and was always her good friend. Ever welcomed with an affectionate smile and infectious, pretty manner, he yielded to her irresistible graces and fascination. The untiring activity he employed in his three several callings was well suited to his character and temperament. He was a big, burly, good-natured fellow, florid, jovial, lavish, and full of whims. In ten years there had not been a single quarrel in his household. He passed at the bureau as a scatterbrain, the character given all artists, but they were superficial thinkers who mistook the constant haste of a busy man for the bustle of a muddler.

Thanks to the relations of Mme. Colleville, the theatre and the department yielded to the exigencies of the cumulatist,

who, in addition to his other duties, was training a young man earnestly recommended by his wife, a great musician of the future, who often took his place in the orchestra, being promised his succession.

As a matter of fact, in 1827, on Colleville's retirement, this young man became the first clarionet.

All the criticism that Flavie aroused was in the words: "She is a *little bit* of a flirt, this Madame Colleville!"

The eldest of the Colleville children, born in 1816, was the living image of the jolly Colleville. In 1818 Mme. Colleville thought the cavalry was everything, even ranking the arts; she smiled upon a sub-lieutenant of the Saint-Chamans dragoons, the young and wealthy Charles Gondreville, who afterward died in the Spanish campaign; her second son was already destined for a military career. In 1820 she looked upon the bank as the foster-mother of industry, the backbone of the State, and the great Keller, the famous orator, was her idol; then she had another son, François, who was to go into mercantile pursuits, and would never lack the protection of François Keller.

Toward the end of 1820, Thuillier, the intimate friend of M. and Mme. Colleville, and Flavie's admirer, felt the necessity of confiding his sorrows to the bosom of that excellent woman, to whom he recounted his conjugal miseries; for six years he had hoped for children, but God had not smiled upon his desires; for poor Mme. Thuillier had vainly said *novenas;* she had even gone to Notre-Dame de Liesse! He depicted Céleste in every phase, and the words "Poor Thuillier" fell from Mme. Colleville's lips, who, on her part, was much depressed; just now she had no predominant opinion. She poured her vexation into Thuillier's heart. The great Keller, the hero of the Left, was awfully mean; she had seen the shady side of glory, the follies of the bank, the shallowness of the Tribune. The orator never spoke, save in the Chamber, and he had treated her very badly.

Thuillier was indignant.

"It's not brutes only that know how to love," said he; "take me!"

And Handsome Thuillier was said to be making up to Mme. Colleville, paying her "attentions," in the words of the Empire.

"Ah! you are fascinated with my wife!" said Colleville, laughing. "But look out or she'll treat you like all the others."

A shrewd speech, allowing Colleville to preserve his marital dignity in the bureau. In 1820-21 Thuillier, under his authority as a friend of the family, was able to assist Colleville, who had so frequently of old helped him; during eighteen months he had loaned the Collevilles ten thousand francs, never intending to speak of it afterward. In the spring of 1821 Madame Colleville gave birth to a handsome little girl, to whom M. and Mme. Thuillier acted as godfather and godmother; she was named Céleste-Louise-Caroline-Brigitte. Mlle. Thuillier wished that one of her names should be given to this little angel. The name of Caroline was a compliment to Colleville.

Old Mamma Lemprun took upon herself the putting out to nurse of the pretty creature, which was kept under her own eyes at Auteuil, where Céleste and her sister-in-law went to see her twice each week. As soon as Mme. Colleville was about again, she said to Thuillier, very frankly and in a serious tone:

"My dear friend, if we wish to remain good friends, you cannot be more than my friend; Colleville loves you: well, then, one in the family is quite enough."

"Explain to me," said Handsome Thuillier to Tullia, the dancer, who had made a call on Mme. Colleville, "why women are so little attached to me. I am not the Apollo Belvedere, but on the other hand neither am I a Vulcan; I am passable, I am intelligent, I am faithful——"

"Would you have the truth?" asked Tullia.

"Yes," said Handsome Thuillier.

"Well, then, although sometimes we may love an idiot, we never love a fool."

These words killed Thuillier; he couldn't get over it; he had a spell of melancholy and accused women of being fickle.

"Didn't I warn you?" said Colleville; "I am not Napoleon, dear boy; I might be sorry if I were; but I have my Joséphine—a pearl!"

The minister's secretary, des Lupleaux, who was supposed by Mme. Colleville to have more influence than he really had, of whom she used afterwards to say "He was one of my mistakes," was during a long time the great man of the Colleville salon; but as he had not the power necessary to have Colleville named for the division of Bois-Levant, Flavie had the good sense to resent his attentions to Mme. Rabourdin, wife of the chief of the bureau, a minx, as she said, to whose home she had never been invited, and who on two different occasions had had the impertinence to stay away from her musicales.

Mme. Colleville acutely felt the shock of young Gondreville's death; she was quite inconsolable; she saw in it, she said, the hand of God. In 1824 she mended her ways, talked economy, gave up her receptions, occupied herself with her children, and became a good mother to her family; and her friends had no knowledge of an attendant favorite; but she went to church, she reformed her dress, she wore sober colors, she talked of Catholicism and the proprieties; and all this mysticism resulted in the production of a bouncing boy, in 1825, whom she named Théodore, that is to say, "the gift of God."

So, in 1826, the good times of the Congregation, Colleville was appointed sub-chief in Clergeot's division, becoming, in 1828, a revenue collector in a Paris arrondissement. He also obtained the cross of the Legion of Honor, which would entitle him to have his daughter educated at Saint-Denis. In 1832, by the advice of Mlle. Thuillier, he settled near them, where he obtained a clerkship in the mayor's office, paying one thousand crowns.

Charles Colleville had just entered the Naval School. The colleges to which the other young Collevilles went were in the same quarter. The seminary of Saint-Sulpice, where the youngest was to be entered some day, was close by the Lux-

embourg. Finally, Thuillier and Colleville should properly end their days together.

In 1833 Madame Colleville, then thirty-five years old, established herself in the Rue d'Enfer on the corner of the Rue des Deux-Églises, with Céleste and the little Théodore. Thus Colleville was at an equal distance from the mayor's office and the Rue Dominique. The family, after leading a life first of show and dissipation, then of tranquil retirement, had become reduced to middle-class obscurity, on a total income of five thousand four hundred francs.

Céleste was now twelve; she promised to be pretty; she needed masters; that would cut down their income by two thousand francs. Her mother felt the need of placing her under the eyes of her godfather and godmother. So she had adopted the proposition, so wisely thought out, of Mlle. Thuillier, who, without committing herself, gave Mme. Colleville to understand pretty plainly that her brother's, her sister-in-law's, and her own fortune were destined for Céleste.

The little girl had remained at Auteuil till the age of seven adored by the good old Madame Lemprun, who died in 1829, leaving twenty thousand francs and a house which was sold for twenty-eight thousand. The sprightly lass had seen more of Mlle. and Mme. Thuillier than of her mother until she went home, after Mme. Lemprun's death, in 1829. In 1833 she fell more than ever under Flavie's management, who tried to do her whole duty by her; and, without being severe, she was very strict with her, overdoing it, as women do who are tortured by remorse. Flavie, without being a bad mother, was rigid enough with her daughter. She had her properly instructed, and, remembering her own early training, vowed secretly that she would make an honest woman of Céleste and not a light one. She took her to mass, and she had her prepared for her first communion under the direction of a Paris curé, who has since become a bishop. Céleste was the more pious because Mme. Thuillier, her godmother, was a perfect saint, and the child adored her god-

mother; she felt that she was more genuinely loved by this poor, lonely woman than by her mother. From 1833 to 1840 she had received a brilliant education, according to the ideas of the French middle classes. Thus the best masters had made of her a tolerable musician; she could produce a water-color; she danced finely; she had learned the language and history of France, geography, English, Italian, in fact, everything suitable to the education of a young lady. She was of average height, somewhat stout, short-sighted, neither pretty nor homely, with a good complexion, yet entirely ignorant of fine manners. She was susceptible of much feeling, but had control of herself; and her godfather, godmother, Mademoiselle Thuillier, and her father were agreed upon the point, the great reliance of mothers, that she was capable of love. One of her attractions was a magnificent head of blond hair, but her hands and feet indicated a plebeian origin. Céleste was endowed with fine mental qualities. She was good, simple, and without malice. She loved her father and mother, and would have sacrificed herself for them. Brought up with a profound admiration for her godfather by Brigitte, whom she had been taught to call Aunt Brigitte, and by Madame Thuillier and her mother, Céleste had the most exalted idea of the ex-clerk, who more and more resembled an old beau of the Empire. The house of the Rue Saint-Dominique impressed her as the château of the Tuileries impresses a courtier of the new dynasty.

Thuillier had not been able to withstand the action of the rolling-mill of administrative routine, where the brains are worn thin in proportion as they are flattened out. Used up by exacting work, besides counting his successes as a lady's man, the ex-sub-chief had lost all his best faculties by the time he had moved to the Rue Saint-Dominique; but his drawn features, which wore a rather arrogant expression, with a mixture of self-satisfaction, which may have been the fatuity of the superior employé, deeply impressed Céleste. She alone adored that sallow face. She knew that she was the joy of the Thuillier household.

The Collevilles and their children, together with an ex-clerk of La Billardière's division, Monsieur Phellion, formed the nucleus of Mlle. Thuillier's society. Phellion was one of the most respected men in the arrondissement; he had become, too, a major in the National Guard. He had one daughter, formerly an under-teacher in the Lagrave school, now married to a professor in the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe, M. Barniol.

Phellion's eldest son was a professor of mathematics in a royal college and gave lessons, coached pupils, and devoted himself, as his father expressed it, to pure mathematics. The second son was at the College of Engineers. Phellion had a pension of nine hundred francs, some little interest on his savings during thirty years of thrift, and owned a little house with a garden attached, in which he lived on the Impasse des Feuillantines. (In thirty years he had not once used the old term *cul-de-sac.**)

Dutocq, clerk to a justice of the peace, had formerly been employed in the ministry of finance; he had been sacrificed to one of the necessities of a representative government; he had permitted himself to be made the scapegoat in a scandal occurring in the office of the committee on appropriations, for which he received a fairly round sum; this had enabled him to purchase his clerkship. This man, of little honor, the spy of the bureau, was not received by the Thuilliers in the manner he thought his due; but his landlord's coldness only made him more persistent in his visits.

He remained a bachelor, and indulged his vices; his life was carefully hidden, and he was an adept at flattering his superiors. The justice of the peace had a great esteem for Dutocq. That infamous person made himself tolerated by the Thuilliers by base and gross adulation, which never fails in its effects. He knew the bottom of Thuillier's life, his relations with Colleville, and more so with madame; they feared his formidable tongue, and the Thuilliers, without

* Blind alley or court.

admitting him to their friendship, permitted his visits on sufferance.

The family that became the flower of the Thuilliers' salon was that of a poor, petty clerk, who had been the object of compassion in the bureau, and who, driven by penury, had left the bureau in 1827 to throw himself into trade with an idea.

Minard foresaw a fortune in one of those dishonorable schemes which are a disgrace to French commerce, but which, in 1827, had not yet been brought to publicity. Minard bought tea and mixed it with dried tea-leaves; then he practised changing the constituents of chocolate, altering it so that he could sell it as a bargain. This trade in colonial produce, begun in the Saint-Marcel quarter, set Minard up in trade. He had a factory, and, through his connections, was now able to obtain the raw materials from their source; thus on an honorable and large scale he carried out the business he had started in such a shady manner. He became a distiller; enormous quantities of raw imports were handled by him, till he came to pass, in 1835, as the richest trader in the Place Maubert quarter. He bought one of the most beautiful houses on the Rue des Maçons-Sorbonne;* he had been deputy and, in 1839, was named for mayor of his arrondissement and judge of the Chamber of Commerce. He kept a carriage, and had a country place near Lagny; his wife wore diamonds at the Court balls, and he flaunted the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole.

Minard and his wife were always excessively beneficent. Perhaps they wished to restore retail to the poor what they exacted wholesale from the public. Phellion, Colleville, and Thuillier encountered Minard during the elections, which resulted in an acquaintance, soon to become intimate, between the Minards, Collevilles, and Thuilliers, because Madame Zélie Minard appeared enchanted to introduce her "young miss" to Céleste Colleville. The Minards gave a fine

* Now the Rue Champollion.

ball for Céleste's *début* into society, she being then sixteen-and-a-half; her dress befitted her name, which seemed prophetic of success in life.

Happy at being on intimate terms with Mademoiselle Minard, her elder by four years, she induced her godfather and her father to cultivate the acquaintance of the Minards, whose house was a resort of several celebrities of the middle-class.

Minard's eldest son was a barrister; he had the hope of succeeding one of those advocates who, since 1830, by their political opinions had become estranged from the Court; he was the genius of the family, and his mother, not less than his father, aspired to see him well married.

Zélie Minard, formerly an artificial flower-maker, had an ardent passion for moving in the higher social circles, which she thought to penetrate into by the marriage of her son and daughter, while Minard, wiser than she, being imbued with the power of the middle-class resulting from the Revolution of July, had his every fibre infiltrated with a desire for wealth.

He haunted the Thuilliers' salon to learn Céleste's prospects as an heiress. He knew, like Dutocq and Phellion, the scandal occasioned by Thuillier's intimacy with Flavie, and with half an eye he was able to see the idolatry of the Thuilliers for their goddaughter. Dutocq, eager for admission to the Minards', fawned on them prodigiously. When Minard, the Rothschild of the arrondissement, first appeared at the Thuilliers', he compared him, almost wittily, to Napoleon, as he now saw him burly, fat, and flourishing, whereas, when he last knew him at the bureau, he was lean, pale, and sickly.

"When you were in La Billardière's division," said he, "you were like Napoleon before the 18th Brumaire, and I see you now the Napoleon of the Empire."

Nevertheless Minard treated him coldly, and extended no invitation for a visit to his house; so he made a mortal enemy of the venomous clerk.

M. and Mme. Phellion, worthy people as they were, could not help indulging in speculations and hopes. They thought Céleste would be a very suitable match for their son, the professor. So, to have a faction in the Thuillier drawing-rooms, they brought there their son-in-law, M. Barniol, a prominent man in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques; and also an old employé in the mayor's office, whom Colleville had in some way supplanted, for M. Laudigeois, a clerk for twenty years in the mayor's office, had expected, as a recompense for his long services, the secretaryship obtained by Colleville.

So they lined up a phalanx of seven, all fairly faithful to each other. The Colleville family was equally numerous, so that on occasional Sundays there would be as many as thirty persons in the Thuillier salon. Thuillier renewed his acquaintance with the Saillards, the Baudoyers, the Falleix,* all people of importance in the Place-Royale quarter, and frequently invited them to dinner.

Mme. Colleville, among the women, was the most distinguished personage of this circle, as Minard's son and Professor Phellion were its superior men; for all the others, without education and ideas, and risen from the lower ranks, were types of the absurd in the lower middle-classes. Although a fortune made in the past seems to imply merit, Minard was but an inflated balloon. He floundered in long-drawn phrases, took obsequiousness for politeness and the form for the spirit, and uttered his commonplaces in such style and mouthings that they were accepted as eloquence. Those phrases which say nothing and answer every purpose—progress, steam, asphalt, National Guard, order, democratic spirit, power of coöperation, legality, motion and resistance, intimidation—seemed at each political crisis to have been invented for Minard, who then paraphrased the ideas of his newspaper. Julien Minard, the young barrister, suffered under his father what his father suffered under his wife. In fact, with her fortune, Zélie had assumed pretensions, though she could never learn to speak decent French;

* See "Les Employés."

she had become fat, and in her handsome attire looked like a cook who had married her master.

Phellion, that model of a lower bourgeois, was equally endowed with virtues and absurdities. A subordinate during a bureaucratic life, he highly respected social superiority. In the presence of Minard he was silent. He had admirably resisted, by his own efforts, the critical times of superanuation, in this manner: never had the worthy and excellent man had a chance of indulging his tastes. He loved the city of Paris; he took intense interest in the improvements and embellishments; he was the man who would be arrested, for two hours running, by the demolition of a house.

He could stand bravely planted on his two feet, nose in air, watching for the fall of a stone which a mason was dislodging with a crowbar from the top of a wall, and did not even quit his place when the stone fell; when all was over off he would go as happy as an Academician at the damning of a melodrama. Veritable components of the great social comedy, Phellion, Laudigeois, and the like, represent the functions of the antique chorus. They weep when others weep, laugh when expected to laugh, singing in chorus over public catastrophes and popular rejoicings, triumphant in their own corner over the triumphs of Algiers, Constantine, Lisbon, and Saint-Jean-d'Ulloa; equally deploring the death of Napoleon and the fatal disasters of Saint-Merri and the Rue Transnonnain; regretting the famous men who are entirely unknown by them.

Still Phellion showed two faces; if any street fighting occurred he stoutly declared himself in the sight of his neighbors: he would be in his place on the parade ground of his regiment, the Place Saint-Michel; he pitied the government, he did his duty; he would help suppress a riot, supported the reigning dynasty, and when the political trials followed made excuses for the culprits. These "weather-cock" opinions were harmless and permeated his political views:

Answerable for all was the "Colossus of the North." As to England, she was like the old *Constitutionnel*, a double-

dealing gossip; by turns "Machiavellian Albion" and a model country—Machiavellian when she jostled the interests of France or bruised Napoleon; a model country when the faults of his government were in question.

He admitted, with the newspapers, the democratic element, and refused in conversation all agreement with the spirit of republicanism. This spirit of republicanism is 1793, rioting, the "Terror," the agrarian law. The democratic element is the development of the middle-classes, the reign of the Phellions.

This honorable old man was always dignified; dignity was the keynote of his life. He raised his children with dignity; in their eyes he was always the father; he insisted on respect being paid him at home, as he honored power and his superiors. He never had a debt. A juryman, his conscience made him sweat blood and water as he followed the pleadings of a trial; he never laughed, not even should the court laugh, or the judge or public authorities. Always at the service of all, he gave his care, his time, all except his money. Félix Phellion, his son, the professor, was his idol; he thought him capable of gaining the Academy of Sciences. Thuillier, between the audacious stupidity of Minard and the candid simplicity of Phellion, was like a neutral element, but there was in him something of each in his melancholy experience. He hid his addled brain by his banalities, as he covered the yellow skin of his skull under the thin wisps of his gray hair, artfully combed back by the barber.

"In all other walks of life," said he, speaking of the bureau, "I could surely have had better luck."

He had seen the good, which is possible in theory and improbable in practice; the results contradicted the premises; he would relate the intrigues, the injustice of the Rabourdin affair.

"After that, how much is one to believe?" said he. "Ah! a queer thing is the administration, and I am very happy in not having a son, so that I cannot see him hustling for a public office."

Colleville, always gay, rotund, good-fellow, joker, and ibbler, inventing his anagrams, always hustling, represented the bourgeois meddler and mocker, the ability without the success, persistent hard work without result, but also the resigned jollity, narrow intelligence, art wasted (he was an excellent musician), for he only played now to amuse his daughter.

Thus this salon was a sort of provincial salon lighted up by reflections from the ever-burning Parisian fire. Its mediocrity, its platitudes kept pace with the current of the age. The word and the thing—for in Paris the word and the thing are like the horse and his rider—never reached there but by a rebound. They waited impatiently for M. Minard, who knew the truth of important matters.

The women of the Thuillier salon were all for the Jesuits; the men defended the University; but the women generally listened. A man of intelligence, if he could have endured the tedium of these soirées, would have laughed as much as at a comedy by Molière, to hear, after a long discussion, such a speech as this:

"The Revolution of 1789 could have been averted, eh? Louis XIV.'s borrowing opened the way. Louis XV., an egoist, a man with the spirit of ceremony" (he had said: "If I were Chief of Police I would abolish cabriolets") "a dissolute king—you know all about his *dear* park!*—contributed largely to open the gulf of revolution. M. de Necker, a malevolent Genevese, agitated it. Foreigners have always had a prejudice against France. The Maximum did much harm to the Revolution. By right, Louis XVI. ought not to have been condemned; a jury would have acquitted him. Why was Charles X. overthrown? Napoleon was a great man, and the details which attest his genius are found in anecdotes of him. He took five pinches of snuff a minute, keeping it loose in his vest pocket lined with leather. He looked off all the contractors' accounts, and went to the Rue Saint-Denis to learn the cost of things. Talma was his

* *Parc aux cerfs.*

friend; Talma taught him all his gestures, and yet he always refused to decorate Talma. The Emperor mounted guard one time for a sentry who had fallen asleep, and thus saved him from being shot. For these things the soldiers worshiped him. Louis XVIII., although a smart man, showed a lack of justice in regard to him when he spoke of him as Monsieur de Bonaparte. The fault of the present government is that it allows itself to be led, instead of leading. It places itself too low. It fears men of energy; it should have torn up the treaties of 1815 and demanded the Rhine of Europe. The ministry plays too much with the same men."

"There, you have displayed enough intelligence now," said Mlle. Thuillier, after one of these luminous reflections; "the altar is dressed, come and play your little game."

The old maid ended all these discussions, such a bore to the women, by this suggestion.

If all these anterior facts, all these generalizations had not been given, as the gist of the argument, to provide a fit setting for this story, giving a due idea of the spirit of this society, perhaps the drama would be the sufferer. This sketch is faithfully and historically truthful, and pictures a social stratum of some importance in this chronicle of manners, more especially when the political system of the younger branch took it as its fulcrum.

The winter of the year 1839 was, in some sort, the time when the Thuillier salon attained its greatest splendor. The Minards were seen there nearly every Sunday; they commenced by passing an hour there when they were obliged to attend other soirées, and oftener than not Minard would leave his wife there, taking with him his daughter and his eldest son, the barrister. This assiduity of the Minards was caused by a meeting between Messrs. Métivier, Barbet, and Minard, on one evening when these two important tenants had remained later than usual to chat with Mlle. Thuillier. Minard was apprised by Barbet that the old demoiselle took of him in the neighborhood of thirty thousand francs in notes each six months; and that she took a like amount from Mé

tivier, so that she must have in her hands at least one hundred and eighty thousand francs.

"I loan on books at twelve per cent, taking only the best [illegible]mes. Nothing suits me better," said Barbet, in conclusion. "I say that she must have one hundred and eighty thousand francs, for she cannot give notes for more than [illegible]nety days at the Bank."

"She has, then, an account at the Bank?" said Minard.

"So I believe," answered Barbet.

Friendly with a governor of the Bank, Minard learned that [illegible]. Thuillier had in fact an account there amounting to [illegible]t two hundred thousand francs, guaranteed by a deposit [illegible]forty shares of stock. This security was, he said, unneces[illegible] the Bank had the highest regard for a person so well [illegible]n as the responsible manager of Céleste Lemprun's [illegible]rs, the daughter of an employé who had seen as many [illegible]s of service as the Bank had been in existence. Mlle. [illegible]llier had not once overdrawn her account in twenty [illegible] She always sent sixty thousand francs in notes at [illegible] months, which came to about one hundred and sixty [illegible]and. The deposited shares represented one hundred twenty thousand francs, so there was no risk, for the [illegible] were of the full value of sixty thousand francs. "In[illegible]" said the comptroller, "if she sent us, in the third [illegible] hundred thousand francs in notes we should [illegible] a single one. She has a house of her own which [illegible] mortgaged and [illegible] more than one hundred [illegible]. Besides, [illegible] notes come through Bar[illegible] Mét[illegible], and [illegible] with four signa[illegible]."

"W[illegible] does Mad[illegible] T[illegible] work so hard?" asked [illegible]rd of Mét[illegible] "W[illegible] the very one for you," [illegible]ded.

"[illegible] as to me," [illegible] Mét[illegible], "I can do better by [illegible] one of m[illegible] Uncle Métivier has prom[illegible] business [illegible] of a hundred thou[illegible] in the [illegible] daughters."

However secret Mlle. Thuillier might be, saying nothing of her affairs to any person, not even her brother; and although she amassed in one lump sum her own investments and those of Mme. Thuillier's beside her own, it was almost an impossibility that no ray of light should at length pierce through the bushel in which she secured her treasure.

"Céleste will have two hundred thousand francs from me in ready money," said the old maid, in confidence to Barbet; "and Madame Thuillier on the signing of her contract will settle her property upon her. As for myself, my will is made. My brother is given a life interest in all, and Céleste will have the reversion. Monsieur Cardot, my notary, is my executor."

Mademoiselle Thuillier had therefore urged her brother to renew his old relations with the Saillards, the Baudoyers, and the Falleix, who held a position similar to that of the Thuilliers and the Minards, in the quarter Saint-Antoine, where M. Saillard was mayor.

Cardot, the notary, had presented a suitor in the person of Maître Godeschal, attorney-at-law, successor to Derville, a man of thirty-six, very capable, who had paid one hundred thousand francs on his connection, which two hundred thousand francs of a *dot* would clear off. Minard soon cleared him off the deck by informing Mlle. Thuillier that Céleste would have for a sister-in-law the famous Mariette, an opera-dancer.

"She left that," said Colleville, alluding to his wife, "and she doesn't intend returning."

"Monsieur Godeschal is altogether too old for Céleste," said Brigitte.

"And then," added Mme. Thuillier, timidly, "would it not be better for her to marry some one of her choice and be happy?"

The poor woman had perceived in Félix Phellion a true love for Céleste, a love such as a woman, crushed by Brigitte and chilled by Thuillier's indifference, who cared no more for the society of his wife than for that of a servant-girl,

t would dream of, bold at heart, shy on the surface, at the [illegible] strong and timid, reserved in society, but expand- [illegible] solitude. At twenty-three, Felix Phellion was a [illegible] man, who had been well brought up by his [illegible] who loved learning for its own sake. He was of [illegible] with light, chestnut hair, gray eyes, a much [illegible] of easy manners, very little given to gesticula- [illegible] thoughtful, never talking nonsense, never contradict- [illegible] incapable of a sordid thought or an egoistical [illegible]on.

[illegible]t's the kind of husband I should have liked mine to [illegible]me. Thuillier often told herself.

[illegible] the beginning of 1840, in the month of February, [illegible]ages whose silhouettes have here been sketched [illegible]sembled in the Thuilliers' salon. It was near the end [illegible] month. Barbet and Métivier waited, as they each [illegible]d to borrow thirty thousand francs from Mlle. Brigitte. [illegible]te and Prudence Minard were sitting together. Young [illegible]on listening to Mme. Thuillier could gaze at Céleste.

[illegible] the other side of the fireplace, enthroned on an easy- [illegible], was the Queen Elizabeth of the family, dressed as [illegible], as when she was thirty years old, for prosperity was [illegible] to cause a change in her habits. Her chinchilla hair [illegible]surmounted by a gauze bonnet ornamented with Charles [illegible] ranium flowers; her Corinth-plum colored stuff gown [illegible] have cost as much as fifteen francs; her embroidered [illegible], worth about six francs, hardly hid the deep hollow [illegible]d by the two muscles which attach the head to the [illegible] Monvel, when he played Augustus in his latter days, [illegible]sterner profile than this autocratic knitter of stock- [illegible] her brother. In front of the fireplace posed Thuil- [illegible]epared to receive any arrivals; by his side stood a [illegible]man whose entrée had produced a great effect, when the [illegible] who on Sunday donned his best clothes to act the [illegible] had announced "Monsieur Olivier Vinet."

[illegible]was here as the result of a confidential hint given by [illegible] to this young magistrate's father, a famous public

prosecutor. Cardot had estimated the present value of the money to be left to Céleste at seven hundred thousand francs at least. Vinet's son had appeared delighted at being given the privilege of going on Sunday as a guest of the Thuilliers. Large marriage-portions in these days lead to the grossest follies without the least shame.

Ten minutes after, another young man, who was chatting with Thuillier before the arrival of Vinet, raised his voice in the heat of a political discussion, making the young lawyer do the same in the excitement of debate. The question was the vote by which the Chamber of Deputies overthrew the ministry of May 12th, in refusing the grant demanded for the Duc de Nemours.

"Most decidedly," said the young man, "I am very far from belonging to the dynastic party, and I am quite as far from approving the elevation of the bourgeoisie into power. The middle-class has no more right now than the aristocracy had then to preëminence in the State. But the French middle-classes have set up a new dynasty for themselves, a royalty of their own, and how do they treat it! When the people allowed Napoleon to elevate himself, he erected a splendid monumental edifice; he was proud of his grandeur, he nobly gave his blood and his sweat for the purpose of consolidating the Empire. Between the magnificence of the aristocratic throne and the Imperial purple, between the grandees and the populace, the bourgeoisie are mean and niggardly; they drag down the powers that be to their own ignoble level, instead of trying to raise themselves. The economies of the candle-ends, of the back-shops they practice on their princes; but what is a virtue in their storehouses is a fault and a crime in high places. I wish for many things that would be good for the people, but I would not have retrenched by cutting off ten millions from the new civil list. Now almost all-powerful in France, the bourgeoisie ought to insure the happiness of the people,—splendor without extravagance and grandeur without privilege."

Olivier Vinet's father was not in harmony at this time

with the present government—he had not yet obtained the [illegible] of keeper of the seals, his great ambition; so the young [illegible] hardly knew how to answer.

"You are quite right, monsieur," said Olivier Vinet. "But before parading, the middle-class owes a duty to France. The luxury of which you speak comes after duty. That which [illegible] seem to think as worthy of reproach was a necessity of [illegible] ment. The Chamber is far from having a full part [illegible] fairs; the ministers work far less for France than for [illegible] rown, and the Parlement wishes to see a ministry, [illegible] at in England, which has a strength of its own, not [illegible] lected, borrowed power. The day that the ministry acts [illegible] self and represents the power of the executive in the [illegible] mber, as the Chamber represents the country, will the [illegible] ment be liberal to the crown. That's the gist of the [illegible] r. I merely give it without saying aught of my per- [illegible] opinion, since the duties of my office require, in [illegible] ties, a species of fealty to the crown."

"Leaving the political question," replied the young man, [illegible] accent indicated a son of Provence, "it cannot be the [illegible] that the bourgeoisie have failed to understand their [illegible] we see public prosecutors, first presidents, peers of [illegible] e, riding in omnibuses, judges who have to live on [illegible] salaries, prefects without private means, ministers in [illegible] hile the middle-class, who have now possession of all [illegible] places, ought to do honor to them as the aristocracy [illegible] rly did, and instead of holding them with the intention [illegible] ng a fortune, as has been demonstrated in numerous [illegible] ous trials, they should employ themselves in a proper [illegible] ture of the revenues."

"[illegible] is this young man?" said Olivier Vinet, hearing [illegible] th wonder. "Is he a relative? Cardot should have [illegible] panied me the first time."

"[illegible] is the little monsieur?" asked Minard of Barbet. "I [illegible] seen him here several times."

"He is a tenant," replied Métivier, dealing the cards.

"A barrister," said Barbet in a low voice; "he has a small

suite on the third-floor front. Oh! he amounts to little, and owns nothing."

"What's his name?" asked Olivier Vinet of M. Thuillier.

"Théodose de la Peyrade; he is a barrister," whispered Thuillier.

All turned round to look at the young man, and Mme. Minard could not refrain saying to Colleville:

"He's a good-looking young fellow."

"I have made an anagram of his name," said Céleste's father; "the letters of Charles-Marie-Théodose de la Peyrade spell out this prophecy: *Eh! Monsieur payera, de la dot, des oies et le chaer.*—Be careful, my dear Madame Minard, not to give him your daughter."

"They find him nicer looking than my son," said Mme. Phellion to Mme. Colleville; "what do you think?"

"Oh! as for looks," replied Mme. Colleville, "a woman might hesitate before making a choice."

Vinet looked around at the roomful of middle-class people and thought it might not be amiss to exalt them; he made out that it was monstrous to try and save out of the emoluments of an appointment, everything had so increased in cost, and so on.

"My father," said he, in conclusion, "allows me a thousand crowns a year, and, including my salary, I can hardly live in a style suitable to my position."

When the young lawyer ventured on this treacherous ground, the Provençal, who had led up to it, winked at Dutocq, just as he was about taking his place at *bouillotte*.

"I have not yet had the pleasure of hearing you in court," said Vinet to M. de la Peyrade.

"I am the lawyer of the poor; I only plead before justices of the peace," replied the Provençal.

When Mlle. Thuillier heard the young barrister's remarks as to the necessity of spending one's whole income, she took on a most prim and ceremonious look, of which the Provençal and Dutocq both well knew the significance. Vinet shortly after took his leave, taking with him Minard and Julien, so

that the battlefield in front of the hearth was left to young Peyrade and Dutocq.

"The higher bourgeoisie," said Dutocq to Thuillier, "will conduct themselves just as the aristocracy were formerly wont to do. The nobles wanted girls with money to improve their lands; our parvenus of to-day want handsome portions to feather their nests."

"That is what Monsieur Thuillier was saying this morning," replied the Provençal boldly.

"His father," replied Dutocq, "married a demoiselle de Chargebœuf, and he has assumed the ideas of the nobility; he must have a fortune at whatever cost; his wife keeps it up in royal fashion."

"Oh!" said Thuillier, stirred up by the envy of the middle-class against each other, "turn such people out of their places, and down they go to the mud they sprang from!"

Mlle. Thuillier was so rapidly knitting that she might be said to have been a machine that was driven by steam.

"Now you can come in the game, Monsieur Dutocq," said Mme. Minard, as she rose. "My feet are cold," she added, going to the fire, which made the gold on her turban scintillate like fireworks in the light of the candles in the hanging "Aurore," which vainly strove to illuminate the spacious salon.

"He is but a Saint-John, this suckling-barrister!" said Mme. Minard, glancing at Mlle. Thuillier.

"A Saint-John, say you?" said the Provençal, "that is exceedingly witty, madame——"

"But madame is witty at all times," said Handsome Thuillier.

Mme. Colleville was studying the Provençal at this time, and comparing him with young Phellion, who was talking with Céleste, without troubling himself with what was going on around them, so it affords a good opportunity to describe this singular person who played a great rôle among the Thuilliers, and who merits the appellation of a great actor.

There exists in Provence, particularly at the port of Avignon, a race of men with blond or chestnut hair, of delicate skin and almost weak eyes, whose pupils are rather soft, calm, or languishing, than fiery, ardent, or deep, as those of Southerners usually are. It may be observed, by the way, that, among Corsicans, a people subject to sudden fits of fury and dangerous angers, one often encounters blonds of apparently passive natures. These fair complexioned men, apt to be stout, with dull eyes, green or blue, are the worst species in Provence, and Charles-Marie-Théodose de la Peyrade afforded a fine type of this race, whose constitution would amply repay examination on the part of medical science and philosophical physiology. There is in their make-up a species of bile, of bitter humor, which mounts to their head, rendering them capable of ferocious deeds, done apparently in cold blood. Resulting from an internal delirium, this sort of dumb rage is irreconcilable with the calmness of their benign look.

Born in the neighborhood of Avignon, the young Provencal was of medium height, well proportioned, rather stout, of dull complexion, not livid, not pale, not florid, but gelatinous, for that face can only be thus described. His eyes, coldly blue, generally wore a deceptive air of melancholy, which no doubt had for women a great charm. His high forehead did not lack nobleness, his light chestnut hair, thin, with a natural curl at the ends, agreeably finished it. His nose was exactly that of a hunting dog—broad, cleft at the tip, inquisitive, intelligent, prying, always alert; it lacked good-nature, but showed irony and sarcasm; but this double-faced nature was only to be detected when he was off his guard—a thing which rarely happened; it was only when he was in a fury that he vented the sarcastic wit and satire which poisoned his infernal jesting.

His mouth was prettily shaped, his lips were red and like a pomegranate, seeming to be the marvelous instrument of a voice of which the medium tones were sweet. Théodose usually spoke in that register, the higher notes of which vibrated like

-ounds of a gong. The falsetto was the voice of his nerves · rage. His face, denuded of expression by his control, . His manner, which accorded with the calm, priest-meanor of his face, was full of reserve and propriety; ere was a certain pliancy in his bearing, which without into fawning or wheedling, did not lack an attraction, h was not to be explained in his absence. Attractive-when it has its source in the heart, leaves deep im-; when it is artificial, it has, like eloquence, but tem-triumphs; it reaches its aims at any cost. But how losophers are there competent to decide? Generally, a popular phrase, the trick is done before ordinary discover the method. Everything about this young corresponded with his real character. He followed his ation in cultivating philanthropy, the only word which account for "philanthropists." Théodose loved "the " but this did not include a love for humanity. As ulturists give themselves up to roses, to dahlias, to pinks, raniums, and care nothing for any species outside of chosen hobby, this young Rochefoucauld-Liancourt de-himself to the workmen, the proletariat, the wretches of abourgs Saint-Jacques and Saint-Marceau. Genius in , the modest poor of the lower classes, he rejected e claims of his charity.

ng all maniacs the heart resembles those boxes with rtments in which sugar-plums are arranged in assorted : *suum cuique tribuere* is their device; they measure each the dose. There are philanthropists who have only r the sins of condemned criminals. Certainly vanity he root of all philanthropy, but in our Provençal it lculation, a part to be played, a hypocrisy liberal and ratic, played with a perfection no actor could have ed. He did not attack the rich, he contented himself not understanding them; he accepted them. In his on every one should enjoy the fruit of his own labors. nowledged himself as having been at one time a fervent e of Saint-Simon, but this was an error only to be

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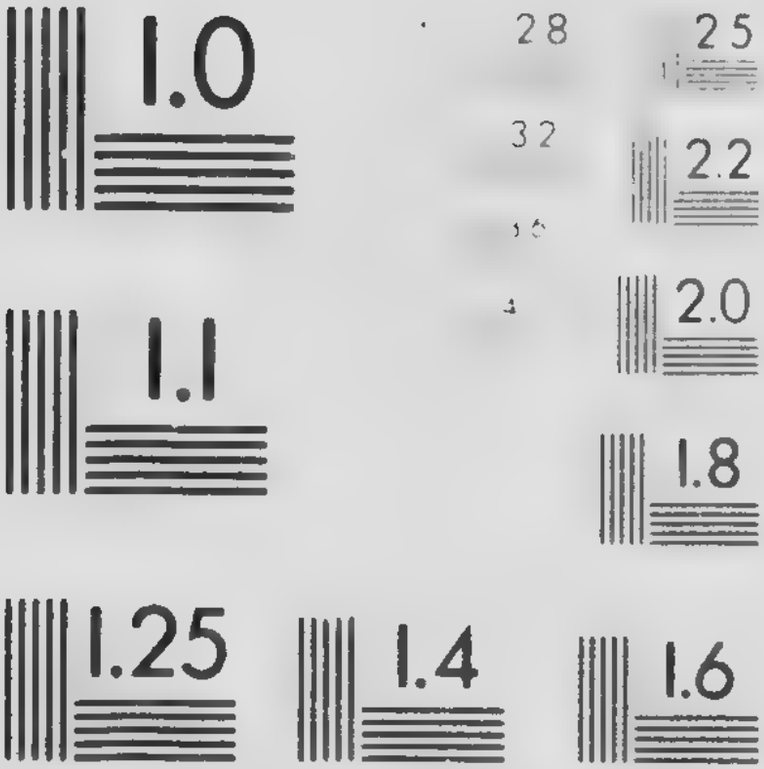

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ascribed to the faults of extreme youth. An ardent Catholic, like all the people of his district, he attended early mass and concealed his piety. He was like all philanthropists in that he was sordidly parsimonious; he gave nothing to the poor but his time, his counsel, his eloquence, and such money as he could pluck from the wealthy. Boots, and black clothes worn until the seams had become white, composed his costume. Nature had done much for Théodose in not giving him that virile, refined Southern beauty, which creates in the imagination of others demands which few men can satisfy. Having no difficulty in pleasing, he was, as the humor suited him, delightfully attractive or very commonplace. Never since his admission into the Thuillier house had he dared, as this evening, to raise his voice, and put on such an autocratic air as he had just done with Olivier Vinet; but perhaps Théodose de la Peyrade had not been sorry to come out from the shade in which he had hitherto kept himself. Besides, it was necessary to get rid of this young magistrate as the Minards had previously shut out the advocate Godeschal. Like all superior minds,—for he was not lacking in ability,—Vinet had not lowered himself to the point where these bourgeois spider-webs could be seen, and, like a fly, had gone headlong into the almost invisible snare into which Théodose had enticed him by one of those tricks which would not have been suspected by a more acute man even than Olivier.

To finish this portrait of the Advocate of the Poor, it may not be amiss to relate his *début* into the Thuillier family.

Théodose had come to Paris toward the end of the year 1837; he had been admitted as an attorney five years previously, and he then went through his term in Paris to become a barrister; but some unknown circumstances, as to which he retained silence, had prevented him from being duly registered as a barrister in Paris, and so he still remained an attorney.

He furnished his third floor as befitted his profession, for the order of advocates does not admit a new brother unless he has a suitable office and library; and it takes measures to verify

these facts, and so Théodose became an advocate in the Assize Court. The whole of the year 1838 was given up to this change in his situation; he led a perfectly regular life; he studied in the morning till time for dinner, sometimes going to the courts to listen to important cases. Having, with difficulty, made friends with Dutocq, he helped some unfortunates in the faubourg Saint-Jacques, whom he had recommended, by arguing their cases before the tribunal; out of charity he obtained for them the interest of pleaders, who, by the statutes, take each his turn in defending the causes of the impecunious; and by taking none but absolutely sure cases he gained each one. He thus made a connection with some lawyers, these praiseworthy efforts made him known, and he soon became a registered member of the Paris bar. He became the advocate of the poor before the justices of the peace, and was always the protector of the common people. These services of Théodose's caused his clients to express their gratitude and admiration in the lodges of the janitors, and, in spite of the young advocate's injunctions, a good many of these traits were retailed before their masters. Delighted to have so excellent and charitable a man as a tenant, the Thuilliers were desirous to attract him as a frequenter of their salon; they questioned Dutocq about him. The clerk spoke like an envious man; while doing the young man justice, he said that his avarice was something remarkable, though that might be caused by his poverty.

"I have inquired about him. He belongs to the la Peyrades, an old family of the county of Avignon; he came here at the end of 1829 to look up an uncle who possessed, or was supposed to possess, a considerable fortune; he finally discovered this relative's residence three days after the death of the old man, and the sale of the effects of the deceased only just sufficed to pay his debts. A friend of this useless uncle pressed one hundred louis upon him, and told him to seek his fortune by engaging in the study of the law, and to try for the higher walks of his profession. This hundred louis defrayed all his expenses for more than three years in Paris,

where he fared like an anchorite; but, as he was unable to find his unknown benefactor, the poor student suffered from the greatest distress in 1833.

"He then, like all licentiates, turned to politics and literature, barely able to support himself; for his father, the youngest brother of the uncle who had died in the Rue des Moineaux, has eleven children living with him on a little domain called Canquoëlles. At length he got on the staff of a ministerial paper edited by the famous Cérizet. The government, after this man left his own party to support them, did not prevent his being ruined by the Republicans. This will account for his being at the present time a mere copying clerk under me.

"Well, when Cérizet was flourishing—who is a right good sort of a fellow, but a little too fond of the women, good cheer, and dissipation—he befriended Théodose and was very useful to him. In 1834 and 1835, he was again pretty hard up, notwithstanding his talent, for his work on a ministerial newspaper told against him. 'But for my religious principles,' he said to me at that time, 'I should throw myself into the Seine.' But at last it seems that his uncle's friend heard of his straitened circumstances and again came to his relief; money enough was sent to enable him to receive his diploma, but he never learned the name or abode of his mysterious protector. After all, under these circumstances economy is excusable; and it requires strength of character to refuse the fees given by the poor devils whose suits he has gained. It is disgraceful to see people speculating on the inability of unfortunate wretches to pay in advance the expenses of suits unjustly brought against them. But he will get on! He will secure a brilliant position; he has tenacity, probity, and courage! He studies—he perseveres."

Notwithstanding the favor with which he was received, he did not thrust himself upon the Thuilliers; but being accused of reserve, he went more frequently than at first. He was invited to all their dinners, and if at any time he called to see Thuillier about four o'clock he would join their meal, taking "pot luck"; Mlle. Thuillier saying to herself:

"We are sure then that the poor young man has dined well."

A social phenomenon, which must certainly have been observed, but which has not hitherto been formulated, or published, if you will, although it deserves being established, is that of a return to the habits, jests, and manners of their primitive condition of certain people, who from youth to old age have raised themselves above it. So Thuillier had, literally speaking, relapsed into the porter's son; he would use some of his father's little jokes, and at length permitted to appear on the surface of his life, in his declining years, a little of the mud of his early days.

About five or six times a month, when the soup was good and thick, he would say, as if it were something quite new:

"This shin soup is better to get than a kick on the shins."

Hearing this joke for the first time, Théodose, who did not know it, lost his gravity and laughed with such heartiness that Thuillier, Handsome Thuillier, felt his vanity immensely tickled, such as it had never been before. This explains why on the same morning of the soirée, while walking in the garden with Thuillier to observe the effects of the frost, he had said:

"You are more witty than you think!" and had received this answer:

"In any other career, my dear Théodose, I should have got ahead, but the Emperor's fall broke my neck."

"There is yet time for you," said the young advocate. "How did that mountebank Colleville get the Cross?"

There, Maître de la Peyrade touched the raw place that Thuillier had hidden from all eyes, even those of his sister, who knew nothing of it; but this young man, interested in studying all the bourgeois' traits, had guessed the secret envy eating up the heart of the ex-sub-chief.

"If you, with all your experience, will honor me by being guided by my counsel," the philanthropist went on, "and more than all will never speak of our compact with any person, not even your excellent sister, at least without my consent, I

will undertake to have you decorated with the acclamations of the whole quarter."

"Oh! if we could but accomplish this," Thuillier had exclaimed, "you don't know what I would do for you!"

This will explain why Thuillier had so visibly puffed himself out, when Théodose had been so audacious as to proffer him advice.

In the arts, and perhaps Molière ranked hypocrisy in the arts by always classing Tartuffe with the comedians, there exists a pitch of perfection above talent to which only genius can attain. There is so little difference between the work of genius and the work of talent that the man of genius only can appreciate the distance which separates Raphael from Correggio, Titian from Rubens. Moreover, people of ordinary capacity are often deceived in this respect. The stamp of genius is a certain appearance of facility. Its work is likely to appear, in a word, ordinary at the first look, it is always so natural even in the most elevated subjects. Plenty of peasant-women carry their children the same way as the celebrated Madonna of Dresden carries hers. Indeed, the acme of art, in a man of such strength as Théodose, is to have said of him later: "All the world would have been taken in!"

Now, in the Thuillier salon Théodose saw the dawning of a spirit of opposition. In Colleville he saw the clear, critical insight of an unsuccessful artist. He knew that Colleville did not like him; Colleville had begun to believe in his anagrams; none of them had failed as prophecies. As an employé he had been mocked at for having rendered Auguste-Jean-François Minard's anagram—*J'amassai une si grande fortune,* or I amassed such a large fortune. Minard was then very poor, but after ten years events had justified the anagram. Now Théodose's anagram was unlucky. His wife's, too, made him tremble; he had never told it to any one, for Flavie Minard Colleville gave: *La vieille C * * *, nom flètri, vole* (Old Madame C., a blighted name, steals).

Several times Théodose had made advances to the jovial secretary of the mayor, and had felt himself repulsed by a coldness unnatural in a man so accessible.

After the game was ended, Colleville drew Thuillier aside and said:

"You allowed this advocate to step a bit too far. He was quite too forward in this evening's conversation."

"Thanks, my friend, a man warned is twice armed!" answered Thuillier, mocking in his sleeve at Colleville.

"Madame," said Théodose in the ear of the pious Mme. Colleville, for he could judge that Colleville was speaking of him to Thuillier, "believe me, if any one here can appreciate you, it is myself. On seeing you, any one would say, here is a pearl fallen in the mire. You are still under forty-two, for a woman is only as old as she seems; many a woman of forty, not at all to be compared with you, would only be too happy to have your tall, sublime figure and lovely face on which love has set its stamp without ever having filled the void in your heart. You have given yourself to God, I know. I am too religious to wish to be more than your friend; but you have given yourself to Him for the reason that you have never found a man worthy of you. Certainly you have been loved, but you have never been worshiped. But here comes your husband, who has never been able to provide a position for you in harmony with your deserts; he hates me because he imagines that I should dare to love you, and thinks to hinder my speaking to you, as he suspects that I may be about telling you that I think I have found a sphere for you in which is your high destiny. No, madame," said he, in a louder voice, "it is not Abbé Gondrin who this year is the Lenten preacher in our humble church of Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas; it is Monsieur d'Estival, one of my compatriots, who devotes himself to preaching for the benefit of the poorer classes, and you will hear one of the most impressive preachers that I know, a priest of little attractiveness outwardly, but what a soul!"

"Then my desires will be accomplished," said poor Mme. Thuillier; "I never could at all understand our famous preachers."

A faint smile was noticed on the lips of Mlle. Thuillier and on those of several others.

"They occupy too much of their discourse in theological demonstrations; this has been my opinion for some time," said Théodose. "But I never talk religion, and only that Madame *de* Colleville——"

"There are, then, demonstrations in theology?" queried, innocently, the professor of mathematics.

"I cannot think, monsieur," replied Théodose, looking at Félix Phellion, "that you ask that question seriously."

"Félix," said old Phellion, coming ponderously to the help of his son, as he noted an expression of pain on Mme. Thuillier's face; "Félix divides religion into two categories; he regards it from the human standpoint and from the divine; tradition and reason."

"What heresy, monsieur!" said Théodose. "Religion is one; it places faith before all."

Old Phellion, confounded with this speech, looked at his wife:

"It is time, my dear——"

And he looked at the clock.

"Oh! Monsieur Félix," said Céleste, in a whisper to the candid mathematician, "cannot you, like Pascal and Bossuet, be at the same time wise and pious?"

The Phellions leaving, the Collevilles soon followed, and none remained but Dutocq, Théodose, and the Thuilliers.

The flatteries addressed by Théodose to Flavie were of the commonest character, but it should be remarked in the interest of this story that the advocate studied these vulgar spirits; he sailed on their waters, he spoke their language. His painter was Pierre Grassou, not Joseph Bridau; his novel was "Paul and Virginie." The greatest living poet for him was Casimir Delavigne; in his eyes the mission of art was utility. Parmentier, *the author of The Potato*, was to him worth twenty Raphaels; the man in the blue cloak appeared to him as "A Sister of Charity." These expressions of Thuillier's he would at times repeat.

"This young Phellion," said Théodose, "is a product of the university of our time, the outcome of a science which has

banished God. What are we coming to? Religion alone can save France. It is the fear of hell alone which can preserve us from the thievery constantly going on in our households, which eats into the soundest fortunes. You all have a secret warfare in the bosom of your family!"

With this shrewd harangue Théodose went away, after bidding good-night to the three Thuilliers, accompanied by Antocq.

"That young man is full of resources," said the sententious Thuillier.

"Yes, on my faith," replied Brigitte, putting out the lamps.

"He is religious," said Mme. Thuillier, being the first to go.

"Môsieur," said Phellion to Colleville, when they reached the School of Mines, and after he had looked around to see that no one could overhear him; "I surrender to the superior knowledge of others, yet I cannot but see that this young advocate plays the master just a bit too much at the Thuilliers'."

"It's my private opinion," said Colleville, who was walking with Phellion behind his wife, Céleste, and Mme. Phellion, "that he is a Jesuit, and I have no liking for those persons—the best of them are no good. To me, a Jesuit is craftiness; he cheats with intent; it is a pleasure for him to deceive, and, as the saying goes, to keep his hand in. That's my opinion, and I have no hesitation in giving it."

"I understand you, môsieur," replied Phellion, who had given his arm to Colleville.

"No, Monsieur Phellion," remarked Flavie, in a shrill voice, "you don't understand Colleville; but I well know his meaning, and it would be best for him to say no more. But these subjects are not suitable for discussion in the street at eleven o'clock, and in the presence of a young person."

"You are quite right, my wife," said Colleville.

As they bade each other good-night, at the corner of the Rue Deux-Églises, Félix said to Colleville:

"Monsieur, your son François could, by being pushed, enter the École Polytechnique; I offer to assist him in passing the examination this year."

"That is too good to refuse! thank you, my friend," said Colleville; "we will attend to it."

"Good!" said Phellion to his son.

"That is very good of you," exclaimed his mother.

"Why, what is there in it?" asked Félix

"That is a clever method of paying court to the parents of Céleste."

"May I never solve another problem if I ever gave it such a thought," exclaimed the young professor. "I found, by talking to the young Colleville, that François had a vocation for mathematics, so I thought it only my duty to so inform his father——"

"Good, my son!" repeated Phellion. "I would not have you otherwise. My wishes are granted; in my son I find probity, honor, and every public and private virtue I can desire."

After Céleste had gone to bed, Madame Colleville said to her husband:

"Colleville, don't be so ready to crudely pronounce judgment on people unless you know them thoroughly. When you speak of Jesuits I know you are thinking of priests, and to oblige me I must beg you to be more careful in expressing your opinions on religion in the presence of your daughter. We are our own masters in respect to sacrificing our own souls, but not those of our children. Do you wish to see your daughter a creature without religion? Besides, my dear, we are at the mercy of the world; we have four children for whom to provide; can you say that at some time or other you may not need the help of this one or that one? Do not make enemies; you have none; you are a good fellow, and thanks to that quality, which is so charming in you, we have got along in life pretty smoothly thus far——"

"There, that will do!" said Colleville, who had thrown his coat over a chair and was now removing his cravat; "I was wrong, you were right, my beautiful Flavie.

"At the first chance, my jolly lamb," said the cunning ttler, patting her husband's cheeks, "be polite to that little cate: he is a sly one; we need him on our side. He is ng a part, eh? Well, play the comedy with him; be pparent dupe, and, if he is smart, if he has a future, him your friend. Think you that I want to see you for- the mayor of an arrondissement?"

"Come here, wife Colleville," said the old clarionet of the ra-Comique, laughing and tapping on his knees as a sign his wife to perch thereon, "let us toast our toes and chat. n I look at you I am more than ever convinced of this th, that the youth of women is in their figure——"

"And in their hearts——"

"In both," answered Colleville; "a light figure and a vy heart——"

"No, big silly—deep."

"What is so nice about you is that you have preserved your h complexion without growing fat! But, there—you have ll bones. I tell you what, Flavie, if I had to begin life er again I should not wish for any other wife than thee."

"And you know very well that I always liked you better n *the others*. How unfortunate that monseigneur is dead! you know what I should like?"

"No."

"A job under the city, a place at about twelve thousand nes, something like a cashier's, either in this municipality at Poissy, or as agent."

"Either would suit me."

"Well, then, if that monster of an advocate could do mething; he can intrigue, you may be sure. I'll sound m—just leave him to me—and more than all else, don't k against his game at the Thuilliers'."

Théodose had touched the sore spot in Flavie Colleville's rt, and this deserves an explanation which may, perhaps, e a synthetic touch on the lives of women.

At forty years of age, a woman, particularly if she has sted the poisoned apple of passion, becomes aware of a

solemn dread: she perceives that two deaths are hers; the death of the body and the death of the heart. Dividing women into two great categories which answer to the common idea of them, the so-called virtuous and the culpables, it is permissible to say, that all alike, after that terrible time of life, resent the anguish of that acute pain. If virtuous and defrauded in their nature's cravings, be it borne with courage or resignation, whether they have buried their revolt in their hearts or at the foot of the altar, they cannot say, without some feeling of horror: "All is over for me." This thought has such strange and diabolical depths that we very often find in it the cause of those apostasies which now and again surprise and astonish the world.

Guilty,—they are in one of those dizzy positions which frequently, alas, end in death or terminate in passions as tremendous as the situation. This is the dilemma of the crisis. Either she has been happy in an atmosphere of incense, moving only in the flowery air of flatteries which is one long caress,—so how can she renounce it?—or, a phenomenon more strange than rare, she has found only delusive pleasures in seeking a happiness which flies from her, spurred to her play like a gambler doubling his stakes; for, to her, the last days of her beauty are the last things that she risks on the cards of despair.

"You have been loved, but never worshiped!"

These words of Théodose, accompanied by a look which read, not her heart, but her life, was the missing word of an enigma, and Flavie felt herself divined.

The advocate had repeated certain commonplaces, but it matters not how manufactured, or of what material, is the whip which touches the raw on the racehorse. The poetry was in Flavie, not in the ode, as the noise is not in the avalanche, although it causes it.

A young officer, two fops, a banker, an awkward youngster, and the poor Colleville, this was her sad list. Once in her life Madame Colleville had dreamed of happiness, but she had never felt it; then death had hastily broken off the only

ssion in which Flavie had found any real charm. For two [illegible] she had listened to the voice of religion, which [illegible] told that neither the church nor [illegible] happiness, [illegible], but of duty and [illegible]; that, in the eyes of these great powers, happiness lies in the satisfaction arising [illegible] painful or costly duties, and that the reward is not of [illegible] world. But she heard a more clamorous voice, and as religion was but a necessary mask, not a [illegible], and he dared not remove it, for she looked upon it as a resource [illegible] the future, she hung on to the church, [illegible] a man at the [illegible]-roads in a forest, seated on a bank, reading the guide-[illegible] of the road, but trusting to chance as to what might [illegible]ppen when the night came.

Thus her curiosity was vividly excited when she heard [illegible]eodose disclose her secret position without apparently [illegible]hing to take advantage of it, only attacking the purely [illegible]rior side of her life, promising her the realization of an [illegible] dream, which had seven or eight times eluded her.

From the beginning of the winter she had known that Théo-[illegible]e had surreptitiously watched her; she had dressed for him, [illegible]ring at times her dress of gray moire, her black lace, and [illegible] headdress of flowers twisted in her mechlin, making the [illegible]st of herself, and he had known it—every man does when [illegible]oman dresses for him. The horrible old beau of the Em-[illegible] had smothered her with coarse flattery;—she was the [illegible]een of the salon; but the Provencal had said a thousand [illegible]es more by a subtle look.

Flavie had been expecting, Sunday after Sunday, that Théo-[illegible]se would make a declaration. She said to herself:

"He knows I am ruined and he has not a sou! Perhaps, [illegible]ough, he is really pious!"

Théodose had no desire to hurry matters, and, like a com-[illegible]tent musician, he had marked the place in the symphony [illegible]re he meant to give the thump on the big drum. As he [illegible]nt to bed he reflected:

"The wife is on my side; the husband cannot suffer me; [illegible]t now they are quarreling, and I shall come out on top, [illegible]r she can do as she wills with her husband."

The Provençal was mistaken, as there had not been the least dispute, and Colleville slept beside his dear Flavie while she said to herself:

"Théodose is a superior man."

Many men, like la Peyrade, derive their superiority from the audacity or the difficulty of an enterprise. The force which they call into play gives firmness to their muscles, and they expand enormously. Then, if successful, or defeated, the world is astonished to find them small, mean, or exhausted. Having excited a feverish curiosity in the minds of the two people upon whom the fate of Céleste depended, Théodose became a very busy man. For five or six days he was abroad from morning till night in order not to see Flavie until her desire should have reached a point which would overstep all the bounds of propriety, and also to force the old beau to call upon him.

The following Sunday he was almost certain to find Madame Colleville at church; in fact, they came out at the same time, meeting on the Rue des Deux-Églises. Théodose offered Flavie his arm, which she accepted, telling her daughter to walk on in front with her brother Anatole. This youngest of her children, then twelve years old, before entering the seminary, was a day-boarder in Barniol's school, where he was receiving elementary instruction; and naturally the son-in-law of Phellion had reduced the price of the board in view of the hoped-for alliance between Phellion and Céleste.

"Have you done me the honor and favor of thinking over what I so clumsily said the other day?" asked the advocate in a coaxing tone of the pretty *dévotee* as he pressed her arm to his heart with a movement at once gentle and firm, for he pretended to dissemble his feelings and appear respectful against his impulse. "Do not mistake my intentions," he continued, receiving a look from Madame Colleville—one of those glances with which women who have indulged in passion can express either severe reproof or a secret community of sentiment. "I love you as one loves a beautiful nature borne down by misfortune. Christian charity embraces the strong equally with the weak; its treasures are for all.

"Refined, elegant, gracious, as you are, made to be the ornament of the most elevated society, what man can see you without a great compassion in his heart, wearing out your life among these odious bourgeois, who know nothing of you—not even the aristocratic value of one of your poses, of one of your looks, or of one of the coquettish tones of your voice. Oh, if only I were wealthy. Ah, if I had but power, your husband, who is certainly a good devil, should become a receiver-general, and you could make him a deputy.

"But I am poor and ambitious; my first duty is to crush my ambition. I find myself at the bottom of the bag, like the last number in a lottery; I can only offer my arm where I fain would give my heart. All my hopes rest on a good marriage, and, believe me, I should make my wife's lot a happy one; not only that, but I should raise her to be one of the first in the State if only she would find me the means for my advancement. It is a lovely day, come for a stroll in the Luxembourg?"

The listless arm held in his own indicated a tacit consent, and as she deserved the honor of a species of violence, he dragged her more rapidly along, adding:

"Come along, we shall not always have such an excellent opportunity. Oh!" he cried, "your husband sees us; he is at the window; walk more slowly."

"There is nothing to fear from Monsieur Colleville," said Flavie, smiling. "He leaves me the absolute mistress of my actions."

"Oh! here is the woman of whom I have dreamed!" exclaimed the Provençal, with that ecstasy and accent emanating only from the souls and spoken by the lips of Southerners.

"Pardon me, madame," said he, checking himself and returning from that lofty sphere to the exiled angel whom he seriously regarded. "Excuse me! to return to what I was saying—— Ah! how can I be otherwise than sensible of the sorrows I myself experience when I see the lot of a being to whom life should bring only joy and happiness? Your

sufferings are mine; I am no more in my right place than you are in yours. Ah! dear Flavie, the first time it was granted me to see you was on the last Sunday in the month of September, 1838. You were lovely; I shall often recall you in that little dress of *mousseline de laine*, colored like the tartan of some Scottish clan. On that day I said to myself: 'Why is this woman at the home of the Thuilliers, and why, above all, should she ever have had relations with a Thuillier?'"

"Monsieur!" said Flavie, startled at the rapid flow which the Provençal gave to the conversation.

"Oh! I know all," cried he, with an expressive shrug of the shoulder, "and can explain everything to myself; I do not esteem you the less. There! these are not the faults of an ugly or humpbacked woman. You must gather the fruit of your error, and I will help you. Céleste will be very rich —and there is where your future prospects must be found; you cannot have more than one son-in-law, so choose him with care. An ambitious man may become a minister, but would humiliate you; he would annoy you, and make your daughter unhappy; and, if he loses her fortune, he will certainly never re-make it. Eh, well, yes, I love you," said he; "and I love you with an affection without bounds; you are above a crowd of petty considerations that bind simpletons. We understand each other——"

Flavie was simply astounded; nevertheless, she was sensible of the excessive frankness of speech; she said to herself: "There is no mystery in such talk as this." But she was fain to acknowledge that never before had she been so deeply moved and agitated as by this young man.

"Monsieur, I don't know by whom you have been misled in regard to my past life, and by what right you——"

"Ah! pardon me, madame," interrupted the Provençal, with a frigidity bordering on scorn; "I have been dreaming! I said to myself: 'She is all that'; but I was deceived. I now know why you will always remain aloft on the fourth floor in the Rue d'Enfer."

A gesture of the arm toward the window at which Colleville stood emphasized this retort.

"I have been frank, I expected reciprocity. Many a day I have gone without bread, madame; I managed to live, studied, obtained the grade of licentiate in Paris, my whole capital being two thousand francs; and I came through the frontière d'Italie with five hundred francs in my pocket, vowing like one of my compatriots, that some day I would become the leading man in my country. And the man who has been rifled his breakfast out of the restaurateurs' baskets into which the leavings were thrown, and which are emptied outside at six o'clock in the morning, when the second-hand clothing-houses can find nothing more fit to take—that man will not shrink from any available chance. Eh, now! do you believe me the friend of the people?" said he, smiling; "one needs a loud voice; she cannot be heard speaking with half-closed lips; and without renown, what is the use of talent? The advocate of the poor will become the advocate of the rich. Is it enough to open to me your mind? Open your heart to me. Say to me: 'We are friends,' and we shall become day be happy."

"My God! why did I come here with you? Why did I take your arm?" cried Flavie.

"Because it is your destiny!" replied he. "Eh, my dear and best-loved Flavie," added he, pressing her arm to his side; "you did not expect commonplaces from me, did you? We are brother and sister—that is all."

And he led her toward the passage, to return to the Rue Chaffer.

Flavie experienced a great fear beneath the satisfaction that a man finds in violent emotions; she wrongly imagined this fear for a new passion beginning; but she was under a spell and walked along in deep silence.

"Of what are you thinking?" he asked, when half-way along the path.

"Of all that you have said to me," she replied.

"But," he answered, "at our age, we skip the prelim-

inaries; we are not children, and we both live in a sphere in which we should understand each other. In short, believe me," he added, as they turned into the Rue d'Enfer, "I am wholly yours," and he made a profound salutation.

"The irons are in the fire!" said he to himself, as his eye followed his bewildered prey.

On returning to his home, Théodose found on his landing a person who in this story figures somewhat as a submarine, or otherwise like a buried church upon which has been erected the front of a palace.

The sight of this man, who after vainly pulling la Peyrade's door-bell, was just ringing that of Dutocq, startled the Provençal, but he did not betray his hidden emotion. This man was Cérizet, Dutocq's copying-clerk.

Cérizet, only eight-and-thirty, looked like a man of fifty, who has become old by all that ages a man. His bald head offered to view a yellow skull barely covered by a rusty, discolored wig; his face, pale, flaccid, irregularly chiseled and harsh, seeming all the more ugly by a much-disfigured nose, but not so badly so as to necessitate his wearing a false one; from the bridge at the forehead to the nostrils it existed as nature had made it, but disease had destroyed its cartileges, leaving two holes of fantastic appearance, thickening his pronunciation and impeding his speech. His eyes, formerly fine, but now weakened by every manner of vice and wear, and by sleepless nights, had become rimmed with red and had a damaged appearance; his look, when stirred by an expression of malice, had frightened both judges and criminals, even those who are afraid of nothing.

His mouth, apparently only containing a few blackened stumps of teeth, was sinister; it was frothy with a white saliva which did not, however, moisten his thin, pallid lips.

Cérizet, a little man, less lean than shrunken, endeavored to correct the misfortunes to his person by his apparel, and, if his dress was not rich, it was at least scrupulously clean, which, perhaps, only intensified its wretchedness. Everything about him seemed doubtful—his age, his nose, his

looks. It was impossible to say whether he was eight-and-forty or sixty; whether his faded blue trousers, neatly strapped, would presently be in fashion or dated from the year 1835. His limp boots, carefully blacked, resoled for the third time, had most likely trodden the carpets of ministers' offices. His overcoat, trimmed with heavy braid, drenched by the rains, with oval buttons that indiscreetly displayed their moulds, showed by its cut that it had once been elegant. His collar and satin tie happily hid his lack of linen, but at the ends the teeth of the buckle had frayed it, and the satin shone with the friction and grease of his wig. In the days of its youth his waistcoat had not been wanting in smartness, but it was one of those which are to be purchased for four francs out of the depths of a ready-made tailor-shop. Each article had been carefully brushed, including the bruised and shining hat. Everything harmonized and matched the black gloves which hid the hands of this Mephistopheles.

He was an artist in evil with whom at first wickedness had succeeded, and who, deceived by his early success, continued to plot infamous schemes, keeping always within the limits of the law. Becoming the owner of a printing business by acting treacherously to his master, he was afterward punished as the publisher of a liberal newspaper; in the provinces he became the pet victim of the Royalist ministers after the Restoration, being known as the "unfortunate" Cérizet. In 1830 his patriotic renown gained him a sub-prefecture, whence he was ousted after six months; he raised such a hullabaloo about it, saying he had been condemned unheard, that Casimir Perier's ministry made him the editor of an anti-Republican paper in the pay of the government. Afterward he went into business and was mixed up in one of the most disastrous joint-stock companies that ever called for criminal prosecution; quite serenely he accepted his severe sentence, blaming the Republicans for it. His term of imprisonment was passed in a lunatic asylum. The government cast him off; they were ashamed of a man with such a disgraceful swindling record, wrought in combination with a re-

tired banker named Claparon, and which brought upon him a well-deserved reprobation. Thus Cérizet, fallen from step to step in the social scale, from a remnant of pity, obtained the place of copyist in Dutocq's office. In the depths of his misery this man dreamed of revenge, and, as he had nothing to lose, he was ready for anything that might encompass it. Dutocq and himself were as one in their habitual depravity. Cérizet was to Dutocq what the greyhound is to the hunter.

Cérizet, who knew all that misfortune can bring, lent money in trifling loans on short time at ruinous interest; he had commenced as Dutocq's partner, and this old gutter-snipe had become the street-hawker's banker; this push-cart huckster's bill-discounter was the gnawing worm of two faubourgs.

When the advocate of the poor arrived, he let into his apartments Cérizet and Dutocq. All three crossed a small room paved in red encaustic tiles, which by their waxed surface reflected the daylight entering through two cotton curtains. From it they went into a little sitting-room furnished with red curtains, a mahogany suite, covered with red Utrecht velvet; on a wall was a bookcase filled with law books. The mantel was ornamented with vulgar gewgaws, a clock with four mahogany columns, and candlesticks under glass shades. The study, where, in front of a coal-fire, the three friends seated themselves, was that of a young limb of the law; it was furnished with an office desk, an armchair, little, green silk curtains at the windows, a green carpet, a set of pigeon-holes, and a couch, over which hung an ivory crucifix mounted on velvet. The bedroom, kitchen, and other rooms overlooked the courtyard.

"Well," said Cérizet, "how goes it? Are we getting on?"

"Yes," replied Théodose.

"Confess that I had a bright idea, eh?" cried Dutocq, "when I thought up a scheme to get round that imbecile of a Thuillier——"

"Yes, but I'm not behindhand," exclaimed Cérizet. "I have come this morning to give you the cord for tying the thumbs of the old maid so as to make her spin like a teetotum.

Don't make any mistake! Mademoiselle Thuillier is every-
g in this matter; only get over her and you have captured
city. Talk little, but talk well, like people who know
r business. My old associate, Claparon, you know, is an
; he will always remain what he has always been—a mere
g-horse. Just now his name is being used by a notary
Paris in association with some builders, who, builders and
, are all going to the dogs! Claparon is the scapegoat;
s not yet been a bankrupt, but every one must have a
ing, and, at this very moment, he is hiding in my den
e Rue des Poules, where he will never be discovered.
Claparon is furious, he hasn't got a sou; and among the
e six houses which are to be sold, one is a perfect gem of
ise, built of squared stone and right near the Madeleine—
s a front patterned like a melon and ravishing sculpture
t, not being finished, it might be had for at most one
fred thousand francs; by spending twenty-five thousand
s on it, the buyer in two years could make ten thou-
francs per annum. In helping Mademoiselle Thuillier
cure this, you can gain her esteem, for you can give her
derstand that such bargains can be picked up through
every year. Vanity can be worked by flattering its self-
eit; money-grubbers either by an attack on or replenish-
their purses. And as, after all, working for Mademoiselle
illier is working for ourselves, it is only fair to let her
it by this lucky stroke."

"And the notary," said Dutocq, "why does he let it slip?"

The notary, my poor boy? It is he who saves us. Being
elled to see his connection in fact ruined, he is reserving
part of the crumbs of his cake. Believing in the honesty
at imbecile Claparon, he has instructed him to find a
nal purchaser; for he looks equally for prudence and
ence. We just allow him to think that Mademoiselle
ilier is an honest maiden lady, who gives the use of her
to poor Claparon, and then both Claparon and the
ry will be caught. I owe this little turn to my good
nd Claparon for letting me in to bear the brunt of the

matter in his stock concern, which was smashed by Couture, in whose skin you would hate to find yourselves!" said he, with a flash of infernal hatred in his dull, fishy eyes. "I have said, monseigneurs!" added he in a rough voice, which passed loud through his nose-holes, and assuming a dramatic pose, for once, at a time of extreme poverty, he had been an actor.

As he finished the door-bell rang, and la Peyrade went to open the door.

"Are you altogether sure of him?" said Cérizet to Dutocq. "I detect a manner about him—in short, I have known traitors."

"He is completely in our hands," said Dutocq; "so I haven't given myself the trouble of watching him; but, between ourselves, I did not think him so smart as he is. We had an idea that we had placed a sorrel horse between the legs of a man who didn't know how to ride, and the lubber is an old jockey! And there you are!"

"He had better look out!" said Cérizet, in an undertone. "I can puff him over like a castle of cards. As to you, Daddy Dutocq, you can watch him at work and see him at every moment; just keep him under surveillance. I'll feel his pulse, too; I'll get Claparon to employ him to get rid of us; then we can judge where we stand."

"That's a good scheme," said Dutocq; "your eyes are as good as most folk's."

"We are all in the same boat; that's all there is to it!" replied Cérizet.

When the advocate reappeared Cérizet was examining all in the study.

"It is Thuillier," said Théodose. "I expected him to call. He is in the salon. It won't do for him to see Cérizet's overcoat," added he, smiling; "the frogs on it would startle him."

"Bah! you rescue the unfortunate, that is your part in the play. Do you need some money?" asked Cérizet, bringing out one hundred francs from his trousers pocket. "There, see, that looks well;" and he placed the pile on the mantelshelf.

"We shall be able to get out through the bedroom," said Dutocq.

"Well, then, adieu," said the Provençal, as he opened for him the door leading from the office to the bedroom. "Come, my dear Monsieur Thuillier," he called out to the beau of the Empire.

When he saw that Thuillier had reached the door of his room, and could no longer see on to the landing, he let out his associates by the other way.

"In six months you should by rights be the husband of Céleste, and doing well. You're a lucky dog; you haven't found yourself in the police dock twice, as I have—the first time in 1825 under a constructive process, or treason, following a series of articles that I never wrote; and the second time for appropriating the profits of a concern that didn't pan out! Now set the pot a-boiling; and be quick about it! Dutocq and I myself need that twenty-five thousand francs, each of us, as soon as may be; be of good courage, my friend," added he, proffering his hand to Théodose, and proving him by his grip.

The Provençal gave his right hand and wrung his with much unction.

"My dear boy, you may be well assured that in every position I attain I shall not forget that from which you rescued me by placing me on horseback here. I am your bait, but you give me the greater portion, and I should be worse than a convict who has become a police-spy if I did not play a fair game."

Cérizet, as soon as the door was closed upon him, peered through the key-hole to try and catch the expression on the lawyer's face, but the lawyer had turned his back and went to join Thuillier, so his suspicious ally could not detect aught.

It was neither disgust nor grief, but joy, that was depicted on the released features.

Théodose, though, saw his chance of success increasing; he flattered himself that he could get rid of his sordid friends, although all he had he owed to them.

Misery has unfathomable depths, especially in Paris, mere bottoms: and when a drowned person is brought to the surface from this bed he brings with him foul matter clinging to his body and his clothes. Cérizet formerly the wealthy friend and patron of Théodose was now the foul stain still attached to the Provencal; and the promoter of the joint-stock company suspected that he wished to be rid of him now that he moved in a sphere where a decent appearance was requisite.

"Well, my dear Théodose," said Thuillier, "we have been hoping to see you each day since Sunday, but each evening has seen our hopes delayed. As this Sunday is our dinner-day, my sister and wife charged me to bid you come."

"I have had so much business," said Théodose, "that I have not had two minutes to give to a soul, not even you, whom I count in the number of my friends, and with whom I have particularly wished to speak."

"How! You seriously think of what you told me?" exclaimed Thuillier, interrupting Théodose.

"If you hadn't called to clinch the business, I should not esteem you as I do," said Théodose, smiling. "You have been a sub-chief; therefore you must have more or less ambition, and in you it is legitimate, or the deuce is in it. See, now! between you and me, when we see a Minard, a gilded blockhead complimented by the King, swagger in the Tuileries; a Popinot in the track of becoming a minister—and you, a man inured to the work of the administration, a man who has had thirty years' experience, who has seen six governments, left to transplant his balsam seedlings! What then? I am frank, my dear Thuillier, I want to give you a push, because you will pull me after you.

"Well, then, here is my plan. We have to name a member of the Municipal Council for this arrondissement, and that man must be you!—and," said he, emphasizing the word—"must be *you!* Some day you will most assuredly be the deputy from the arrondissement, when we reëlect the Chamber—it's not far off. The voices which nominate you

for the Municipal Council will be there when the time for
ting a deputy comes; you leave it to me."

"But what means have you?" exclaimed Thuillier, fasci-
d

"You shall know: but leave me alone to manage this long
difficult business; if you commit any indiscretion on what
have said as to our plans or the arrangements between
I leave you to yourself, and remain yours truly!"

"Oh! you may count on the absolute dumbness of an old
chief; I have had secrets——"

"Good! but you must keep these secrets from your wife,
sister, and Monsieur and Madame Colleville, when we
with them."

"Not a muscle of my face shall move," said Thuillier, com-
g his features.

"Good!" replied la Peyrade; "and I will test you. To be
ble, it is necessary to pay your full taxes, and you don't
this."

"Your pardon! for a seat in the Municipal Council I am
right; I pay two francs and eighty-six centimes."

"Yes, but for the Chamber the amount is five hundred
nes, and there is no time to be lost, for possession is neces-
for a year."

"The devil!" said Thuillier. "Here in a year's time I
to be assessed at five hundred francs."

By the end of July, if not earlier, you may be paying it;
devotion to you leads me to confide to you the secret of
affair by which you may gain thirty or forty thousand
es a year with a capital of one hundred and fifty thou-
d at the most. But, in your household, it is your sister
for a long time has had the direction of your affairs;
that I have no fault to find; she has, as I said before,
best judgment in the world; therefore it will be requisite,
start, that I conquer her esteem; the affection of Made-
selle Brigitte may be accomplished by proposing this in-
ment to her, and here is the reason: If Mademoiselle
uillier has not faith in me, we should get into trouble; then

how are we to suggest to your sister that she should purchase the property in your name? It were better that the idea should come from me. You shall, in the meantime, both be enabled to judge of this business. As to the means I have to push you into the Municipal Council of the Seine, here they are:

"Phellion has the disposition of one-fourth of the votes in the quarter; he and Laudigeois have lived there thirty years; they are looked upon as oracles. I have a friend who controls another fourth; and the curé of Saint-Jacques, who is not without a certain influence due to his virtues, may secure some votes. Dutocq, by his acquaintance, as a justice of the peace, with the people, will do his utmost for me, especially if it is not done for my personal benefit; finally Colleville, as secretary to the mayor, represents one-fourth of the votes."

"Why, you are right; I am elected!" cried Thuillier.

"You think so?" said la Peyrade, and his voice had an alarming irony; "well, then, only go to your friend Colleville asking him to assist you; you will see what he says. Every success in election matters is not made by the candidate himself, but by his friends. He must ask for nothing for himself; he must leave himself in the hands of his friends; he must wait to be begged to accept it, seeming to be without the ambition."

"La Peyrade!" exclaimed Thuillier, rising and taking the hand of the young advocate; "you are a very clever man."

"Not equal to you, but I have my little merits," replied the Provençal, smiling.

"And if we succeed, how can I recompense you?" asked Thuillier, innocently.

"Ah! that's it! You will think me impertinent; but bear in mind that there is within me a feeling which must be my excuse; for it has given me the courage to try every resource. I am in love, I give you my confidence——"

"But with whom?" said Thuillier.

"Your darling little Céleste," replied la Peyrade; "and my

surety for my devotion to you: what would I not do father-in-law! It is but selfishness. I do but work for

at!" cried Thuillier.

my friend," said la Peyrade, taking Thuillier by the f I had not had Flavie for me, and if I had not known ould I speak of it to you? Only mind this, don't men- word on this subject to her. Listen to me, I am of the hat ministers are made. I do not want to wear Céleste I have won her. Do not give her to me until your n as a deputy is assured. To become a deputy for Paris aust first annul Minard; wipe him out, but still our influence over him; to this end let them still hope Céleste, and we'll trick them all. Madame Colleville, and I will one day be famous persons. I don't want for her fortune, I want her for herself. You see I have no underhand scheme, while you six months after ng the Council will have the Cross, and as soon as you ted deputy will be made an officer of the Legion of . As to your speeches in the Chamber, ah, well, we will them conjointly. Perhaps it would be advisable that hould write a book on some important matter, partly l, partly moral, such as charitable institutions con- d from an elevated standpoint, the reform of the pawn- establishments, the abuses of which are frightful. add a little celebrity to your name. Well, then, trust ; do not think of making me a member of your family you have the ribbon in your button-hole, on the day ing that on which you enter the Chamber; nevertheless, do still more: I can get you forty thousand francs a

r only one of these three things you could have our

hat a gem!" said la Peyrade, raising his eyes to heaven. foolish enough to pray God for her every day. She rming—she is very like you, very. Well, well, you need ar my discretion. My God, it was Dutocq who told me

all. Till this evening. I am going to Phellion's to work for you. By-the-by, don't forget that you never intended Céleste for me. Above all, say nothing to Flavie. Wait until she speaks to you. This evening Phellion will urge your adhesion to his plans to nominate you as candidate."

"This evening?" said Thuillier.

"This evening," said la Peyrade, "if I find him at home."

As Thuillier went out he said to himself:

"That's a very superior man! We shall get along together famously, and, my faith, it would be hard to beat him as a match for Céleste. They will live at home with us. That is a great deal. He is an honest fellow, a good man."

To men of Thuillier's stamp, a secondary consideration has all the importance of a prime reason. Théodose had been charmingly agreeable.

The house toward which Théodose soon afterward went his way had been the *hoc erat in votis* of Phellion during twenty years past; it was as much the house of Phellion as the frogs were an integral portion of Cérizet's overcoat and its indispensable ornament.

This building, planked up against a great house, of the depth of one room only, some twenty feet, had a species of little wing or lean-to on either side, each having one window. It had for chief charm a garden some thirty fathoms wide, but longer than the frontage by the width of a court from the street, and a thicket of lime-trees.

This edifice of rough stone, stuccoed over, two storeys high, was yellow-washed, with Venetian blinds above and plain, broad shutters below, painted green. The kitchen occupied the first floor at the end, by the courtyard; a stout, strong girl, protected by two great dogs, was the cook and janitor. The front had five windows, besides the two wings which projected about six feet, and was in the "Style Phellion." Above the door the owner had inserted a marble tablet, on which was inscribed in letters of gold: *Aurea mediocritas*. Over a sun-dial he had a tablet on which was traced this sage maxim: *Umbra mea vita sic!*

He had lately restored the window-sills with Languedoc marble which he had picked up in a stonemason's yard. the end of the garden was a colored statue which passers-thought looked like a nurse suckling a baby. Phellion his own gardener. The ground-floor consisted solely of awing-room and a dining-room, separated by the stair-, the landing-place of which served as an antechamber. At end of the salon was a small room which Phellion used as office.

by the first floor were the chambers of the married couple that of the young professor; above were the apartments e children and the servants; for Phellion in consideration s own age and that of his wife, and especially since his had become a teacher, had taken a male servant about n years old. At the left, on entering the court, was a l building, used as a wood-shed, where the former pro-r had lodged a porter. The Phellions were doubtless ng for the marriage of their son, the professor, to in-m this luxury. This small freehold, which had been coveted by the Phellions, had cost eighteen thousand n 1831. The house was separated from the courtyard balustrade set on a wall of hewn stones, decorated with w tiles laid one upon another, and crowned with flag-s. This little parapet, about breast-high, was reinforced hedge of Bengal roses, and in the centre was a wooden resembling a lattice fronting the double gates opening on street.

acquainted with the alleys of the Feuillantines will stand that Phellion's house, standing at a right-angle to street, had a full southern exposure, and was sheltered north by the huge party-wall against which it was The domes of the Pantheon and of the Val-de-Grâce, from there, resembled two giants, and so restricted the at in walking in the garden one felt stifled. Noth-ever, is so silent as the alleys of the Feuillantines.

was the retreat of this great but unknown citizen, who njoyed the sweets of repose, after having paid his

debt to his country by working in the Bureau of Finance, from which he had retired as first-class clerk after thirty-six years' service.

In 1832 he had led his battalion of the National Guard in the attack at Saint-Merri, but his neighbors saw tears in his eyes at the thought of being compelled to fire on the misguided Frenchmen. The affair was decided when the legion crossed the bridge of Notre Dame on the double-quick, after having deployed by the Quai aux Fleurs. This virtuous hesitation won him the esteem of his quarter, but lost him the decoration of the Legion of Honor. The colonel declared in a loud voice, that one should never hesitate when under arms,—a saying of Louis Philippe to the National Guard at Metz. Nevertheless the bourgeois virtues of Phellion, and the profound respect felt for him in his district, kept him in command of his battalion for eight years. He was now nearly sixty, and he saw the time approaching when he would be forced to lay by the sword and the military cravat; but he hoped the King would reward his services by giving him the cross of the Legion of Honor.

The truth compels me to say, notwithstanding the stain this pettiness leaves on such a fine character, that Phellion stood on tiptoes at the receptions at the Tuileries, put himself in the foreground, looked sideways at the citizen-king when he dined at his table, intrigued in secret, but had never been able to obtain a glance from the King of his choice. The worthy man had more than once thought of asking Minard to aid him in his secret ambition, but had not yet made up his mind to do so.

Phellion, a believer in passive obedience, was stoical in matters of duty, and bronze in affairs of conscience. To finish this portrait on the physical side, at fifty-nine years Phellion had grown stout; his face, expressionless and marked by small-pox, had become like a full moon, so that his lips, formerly thick, were now unnoticeable. His eyes were weak; and concealed by spectacles no longer caused a smile by their guileless blue; his white hair now gave an air of

ty to features which a dozen years before had provoked
de. Time, which changes so sadly refined and delicate
es, improves those which in youth were coarse and
This was the case with Phellion. He had employed
sure of his declining years in composing an abridgment
history of France, for Phellion was the author of
works adopted by the University.

la Peyrade presented himself the family was com-
all being present in their Sunday best and sitting
the fire in the salon—a room wainscoted in wood,
d in two tints of gray. They all started when the cook
nced the very man whom they had all been discussing
rence to Céleste, Félix's love carrying him so far as to
him to go to mass in order to see her.

Va-! the Thuilliers appear to me to be set upon a really
rous man," said Mme. Phellion; "he took Madame
l' on his arm this morning and they went off together
Luxembourg."

"That advocate has something peculiarly sinister about
" cried Félix: "if I were told that he had committed some
, I should not be at all astonished."

"You are going too far," said his father: "he is cousin-
n to Tartuffe, that immortal figure cast in bronze by
onest Molière, for Molière, my children, had honesty
patriotism for the basis of his genius."

s speaking he perceived Geneviève enter, who said:
Here is Monsieur de la Peyrade, who wishes to speak to
sieur."

o me!" cried M. Phellion. "Bid him enter!" added
that solemnity in little things that gave him a ridiculous
ut not to his family upon whom it always imposed,
ll of whom accepted him as their king.

what do we owe the honor of your visit, monsieur?"
Phellion severely.

your importance in the quarter, my dear Monsieur
, and to public affairs," replied Théodose.

hen we will pass through to my study," said Phellion.

"No, no, my friend," said Mme. Phellion, a little woman, as flat as a flounder, and who still retained on her face the grim severity which is habitual to the professor of music in young ladies' seminaries; "we will leave you here."

An upright Erard piano placed between the two windows and fronting the fireplace proclaimed her pretensions to still rank as a virtuoso.

"Am I so unhappy as to cause you to take flight?" said Théodose, pleasantly smiling at the mother and daughter. "You have a delightful retreat here," continued he, "and you only need the presence of a pretty daughter-in-law to enable you to pass the remainder of your days in that *aurea mediocritas*, the desire of the Latin poet, in the midst of family joys. Your antecedents merit this recompense, after all that you have done, my dear Monsieur Phellion; you are at once a good citizen and a patriarch——"

"Môs eur," said Phellion, quite embarrassed; "môsieur, I have done my duty and that is all."

At the word "daughter-in-law," spoken by Théodose, Mme. Barniol, who was as like her mother, Mme. Phellion, as two drops of water resemble each other, looked at Mme. Phellion and Félix in a manner which seemed to say: "Can we be mistaken?"

The desire to talk about this incident caused the four to go out into the garden, for, in March, 1840, the weather was quite fine, at least in Paris.

"Commandant," said Théodose when alone with the honest burgher, who was flattered at being thus addressed, "I have come to speak with you on election matters."

"Ah! yes, we have to nominate a municipal councillor," said Phellion, interrupting him.

"And it is in reference to a candidate that I have ventured to trouble your Sunday enjoyment; but, perhaps, we may not, after all, go beyond the family circle."

It was impossible that Phellion could be more Phellion at this moment than Théodose was Phellion.

"I will not allow you to say another word," replied the

mandant, profiting by a pause made by Théodose to cut
"My choice is made."

We have, then, the same idea," cried Théodose, "people
od intent meet on a common ground the same as men of
s."

I don't know about that being so this time, it would be
menal," answered Phellion. "This arrondissement has
a representative on the Municipal Council the most
ous of men, who was also a great judge, you know, the
Monsieur Popinot, who died as Councillor of State. When
necessary to replace him, his nephew, who inherits his
ence, was not then a resident in the quarter, but, since
he has purchased and now occupies the house that be-
d to his uncle, on the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Gene-
: he is doctor at the Polytechnic and also at one of the
tals; he is an ornament to our quarter; by these titles,
honor in the person of the nephew the memory of the
, some residents of the quarter and myself have resolved
rry Dr. Horace Bianchon, member of the Academy of
ces, as you know, and one of the new glories of the illus-
school (of medicine) of Paris. A man is not great in
yes simply because he is celebrated, but the late Coun-
Popinot was, in my opinion, nearly a Saint-Vincent de
"

doctor is not an administrator," replied Théodose;
I have come to ask your vote for a man who in your
terests demands the sacrifice of any predilection, which
is a matter of indifference to the public."

! monsieur!" cried Phellion, rising and posing like
in his "La Gloriaux" attitude, "can you so belittle
to think that my personal interests can ever influence
itical conscience? On the side of public matters, I am
n, nothing more, nothing less."

dose smiled in his sleeve at the thought of the struggle
to take place between the father and the citizen.

"I engage yourself too earnestly, I entreat you," said
rade; "for the happiness of your dear Félix is at stake."

"What do you mean by those words?" asked Phellion, standing in the middle of the room, his hand across his breast, —the favorite pose of the famous Odilon Barrot.

"Why, I have come on behalf of our mutual friend, the worthy and excellent Monsieur Thuillier, whose influence over the destinies of the lovely Céleste Colleville are not unknown to you, and if, as I believe, your son, who might make any family proud of his alliance with it, and whose merit is indisputable, would pay attentions to Céleste with a view to a marriage in every way suitable, you cannot better further this marriage than by earning the eternal gratitude of the Thuilliers by recommending him to your fellow-citizens for their suffrages. As to me, although a newcomer in the quarter, thanks to the influence acquired from some services rendered the poor, I might take this step myself; but services to the poor are of little value in the eyes of the more fortunate; and, moreover, the modesty of my life does not comport with this publicity. I have devoted myself, monsieur, to the service of the humble, as did the late Councillor Popinot, a sublime man, as you say; and if my destiny were not in some sense religious, and thus antagonistic to the obligations of marriage, my taste, my further vocation would be for the service of God and His church. I am not always before the public like other philanthropists; I do not write, I work, for I am a man who has vowed to do all for the good of Christian charity. I have guessed at the ambition of our friend Thuillier, and I wish to contribute to the happiness of two beings, made for each other, by offering you the means of gaining access to the heart, a somewhat cold one, of Thuillier."

Phellion was dumfounded by this excellent harangue, cleverly spoken: he was dazed, startled; but he remained the same Phellion: he went toward the advocate and extended his hand, and la Peyrade gave him his.

They gave one of those grasps of the hand such as were given, about August, 1830, between a bourgeois and a man of the morrow.

"Môsieur," said the commandant, with feeling, "I judged

wrongly. What you have given me the honor of con-
ing here will here die," pointing to his heart. "You are
of those rare men who console us for the evil inherent in
social state. Real worth is so rare, that in our weak na-
we are apt to be distrustful of it when it appears. In me
have a friend, if you will allow me to do myself the honor
taking such title. But, môsieur, you must learn to know
; I should sink in my own estimation if I proposed Thuil-
r. No, my son must never know happiness at the cost
f a bad act done by his father. I shall not change my vote to
other candidate to further my son's interest. That is vir-
, môsieur!"

La Peyrade took out his handkerchief, rubbed it into his
and brought forth a tear, and said, extending his hand to
ellion and turning his head:

"There, monsieur, is the sublimity of private life and polit-
l life in conflict! Not for anything would I have missed
spectacle—my visit is not wasted. What would you? in
ur place I should do the same. You are the noblest work
God—an honest man; a good man, a fellow-citizen of Jean-
ques! With more of such citizens, oh, France, my
ntry, what might you not become! Monsieur, I crave
e honor of being your friend."

"What's going on?" cried Mme. Phellion, who was looking
the scene through the window. "Your father and that
nster of a man are embracing each other!"

Phellion and the advocate went out to rejoin the family in
garden.

"My dear Félix," said the old man, pointing to la Peyrade,
ho bowed to Mme. Phellion, "be very grateful to this worthy
ng man; he will be more helpful than injurious to you."

For about five minutes the lawyer walked under the leafless
trees with Mme. Phellion and Mme. Barniol, and during
t time gave them a bit of counsel, which was to bear fruit
evening; the first happy result being to cause the ladies
dmire his talents, candor, and other inappreciable qualities.
he advocate was conducted to the street door by the family

in a body, and all eyes followed him until he had turned the corner of the Rue Faubourg Saint-[illegible]

After he had bidden them adieu, Mme. Phellion took her husband's arm, to reenter the salon, and said to him:

"And what made you, my friend, so good a father, by an excessive delicacy, throw obstacles in the way of so good a marriage for our Feby?"

"My dear little woman," replied Phellion, "the great men of antiquity, such as Brutus and others, were never fathers when they had to be citizens. The middle-class has, even more than the aristocracy which it is called upon to replace, to exercise the highest virtues. Monsieur de Saint-Hilaire thought not of the loss of his [illegible] when he saw Turenne lay dead before him. Shall I betray such feelings in the bosom of his family where I have to get there? No. Weep to-day, my dear, to-morrow you will esteem me!" he added, as he perceived tears in the eyes of his meagre little wife.

These grandiloquent words were spoken on the threshold of the door over which was written: *Aurea mediocritas.*

"I should have added: *et digna!*" added Phellion, pointing upward to the tablet; "but those two words are too eulogistic."

"But, father," said Marie-Théodore Phellion, the future engineer of roads and bridges, when they were again in the salon, "it seems to me that a man does not fail in the matter of honor by changing his determination in regard to an unimportant matter when it does not concern the public."

"Unimportant, my son!" cried Phellion. "Between ourselves, and Félix shares my convictions, Môsieur Thuillier is without any kind of capacity; he knows nothing. Horace Bianchon is a capable man; he would get a thousand things done for the arrondissement, and Thuillier not one. Moreover, my son, to exchange a good determination for a bad one, for motives of personal interest, is an infamous action, which may escape the censure of men, but which God will punish. My conscience is free from blame, and I wish to leave my memory unblemished to you. Therefore nothing can change my opinion."

Oh! my good father," cried the little Mme. Barniol, swing herself on a cushion at the knees of Phellion, "don't get the high horse! There are lots of imbeciles and simpons in the Municipal Council, but France goes on just the [illegible] He'll vote the same as others, this honest Thuillier. [illegible]ember that Céleste will have five hundred thousand francs [illegible]ps."

"She might have millions," said Phellion, "yet I would [illegible] them there. I will not propose Thuillier, when my [illegible] to the memory of the great virtues of the best man who [illegible] lived says nominate Horace Blanchon. From high in [illegible]heavens, Popinot contemplates and applauds me," cried [illegible]on enthusiastically. "It is such transactions that hu[illegible]ate France, and bring contempt upon the middle classes."

"My father is right," said Félix, arousing from a brown [illegible]y; "he deserves our [illegible] and love, as he has always [illegible]n the course of his unpretending and honored life. I [illegible]ot desire to owe my happiness to remorse in his noble soul [illegible] intrigue. I love Céleste as much as I love my family, [illegible] I do not wish to rise at the cost of my father's honor; [illegible]," he added, "the moment the question becomes one of con[illegible]ce to him, let no more be said."

Phellion, his eyes filled with tears, went to his eldest son, [illegible] him in his arms, and said in a broken voice:

"My son, my son!"

"This is all rubbish," said Mme. Phellion, in a whisper to [illegible] Barniol; "come and help me dress, we must put an end [illegible] his; I know your father, he is obstinate. To carry out [illegible] scheme which that noble and pious young man gave me, [illegible]odore, I shall need your support—therefore be ready, my [illegible]

At this moment Geneviève came in and delivered a letter [illegible] M. Phellion.

"An invitation to dine with the Thuilliers for my wife, [illegible]lf, and Félix," said he.

The magnificent and startling idea of the advocate of the [illegible] had caused as much turmoil at the Thuilliers' as at

the Phellions'; and Jérôme, without confiding anything to his sister, for he piqued himself on his honor to his Mephistopheles, had gone to her room and said:

"Good little woman" (he always caressed her heart with these words), "we shall have some top sawyers to dinner to-day: I shall invite the Minards, so let us have a good dinner: I have written the Phellions an invitation, it is a little late, but with them it won't matter. As to the Minards, I must throw dust in their eyes; I need them."

"Four Minards, three Phellions, four Colleville, and ourselves—that is thirteen."

"La Peyrade, fourteen; it might be as well to invite Dutocq; he can give us a push; I'll go up to him."

"What are you up to?" cried his sister; "fifteen to dinner, that means at least forty francs sent dancing!"

"Don't regret that, my good little woman; above all, be especially agreeable to our young friend la Peyrade. He is a friend—he will prove it! If you love me, care for him like the apple of your eye."

And he left Brigitte stupefied.

"Yes, yes, I will wait till he does prove it," said she to herself. "He can't catch me with pretty words, not I! He is a nice boy, but, before carrying him in my heart, I must study him a little more."

Thuillier, who had adorned himself, invited Dutocq; then off to the Minards' house, where he had to bamboozle Zélie into coming. Minard had bought one of those great sumptuous dwellings which the old religious orders had erected in the vicinity of the Sorbonne. As he ascended the broad, stone stairway, with a balustrade, which showed how well the arts of the second order had flourished under Louis XIII., he envied the mayor his hôtel and position.

This vast structure, between courtyard and garden was distinguished by the style, at once elegant and noble, of the reign of Louis XIII.,—coming strangely enough between the bad taste of the expiring Renaissance and the dawning of the grandeur of Louis XIV. This transition is emphasized by

ay structures still remaining. The massive scrolls of the ches like those on the Sorbonne, and pilasters after the an style begin to appear in this architecture.

In this handsome house, a retired grocer, a successful cloth, succeeded the ecclesiastical director of an institution early called the *Économat*, connected with the general of the old French clergy, a foundation due to the fore- t of Richelieu. Thuillier's name opened the doors of the where, amid red velvet and gold, in the midst of the most nificent Chinese stuffs, a poor woman sat, who at every liar ball crushed the hearts of the princes and princesses the Château.

Does not this justify 'the Caricature'?" said a smiling ladyship of the bedchamber to a duchess who could not from laughing at the appearance of Zélie tricked out er diamonds, as red as a poppy, squeezed into a spangled , and rolling about like one of the barrels in her old store.

'Can you pardon me, fair lady," said Thuillier, wriggling nd and ending by striking an attitude, number two of his ertoire of 1807, "for having left on my desk this invita- which I really thought had been sent you? It is for to- , perhaps I come too late——"

Zélie examined her husband's face, as he advanced to meet illier, and responded:

We had intended going to have a look at the country d dine by *chance* at a restaurant, but we can readily re- nce the project, all the more willingly because it seems to o diabolically common to go out of Paris on a Sunday."

'We can have a little hop to the piano for the youngsters, ere'll be enough of us, and I presume there will be, as I word to Phellion, whose wife is intimate with Madame n, the successor——"

'The successtress," interrupted Mme. Minard.

Oh, no," replied Thuillier, "it would be successoress, as the mayoress, of the demoiselle Lagrave, and who was Barnol."

'Is it necessary to dress?" asked Mme. Minard.

"Oh, well, yes!" said Thuillier; "otherwise I should get in trouble with my sister. No, no, it is only in the family. Under the Empire, madame, we learned to know each other by dancing. In those glorious days, a good dancer was esteemed as highly as a fine soldier. To-day people are too matter of fact . . ."

"We won't talk politics," said the mayor, smiling. "The King is a great man and very smart. I live in admiration of our times and the institutions which we have given ourselves. The King understands what he is doing when he develops our industries; it is a hand-to-hand fight with England, and we are doing her more harm during this fruitful peace than by all the wars of the Empire."

"What a deputy Minard would make," said Zélie naïvely. "Between you and me, he practises speaking when we are alone; you will help to get him returned, will you not, really, Thuillier?"

"No talking politics," replied Thuillier. "Come at five o'clock."

"That little Vinet, is he to be there?" asked Minard. "Without doubt he has an eye on Céleste."

"Then he may order his crêpe," answered Thuillier. "Brigitte will not hear him spoken of."

Zélie and Minard exchanged smiles of satisfaction.

"Think of our associating with such people for our son's sake," said Zélie to herself when the mayor was escorting Thuillier down the stairs.

"So you wish to be a deputy," said Thuillier to himself. "Nothing satisfies these grocers. My God, what would Napoleon say to see power in the hands of such people? I am an official at least. What does la Peyrade mean?"

After inviting the Laudigeois when he left the Minards, he called on the Colevilles to be sure that Céleste wore a pretty toilette. He found Flavie somewhat pensive, and Thuillier had to overcome her indecision.

"My old and my ever-young love," said he, putting his arm about her waist, for she was alone in her room, "I can-

ve any secrets from you. I have a most important affair nd. I cannot say more, but I can ask you to be particu- gracious to a young man——"

Who?"

ong la Peyrade."

And why, Charles?"

holds my future in his hands; then, too, he is a man us. Oh! I know. It is like this," said Thuillier, g a dentist pulling a tooth. "We must secure him, but above all we must not let him see anything; we ot show him the secret of his strength."

Hey! You want me to play the coquette with him?"

Not too much, my angel," replied Thuillier, with a fatu- ".

off he went without noticing a species of amazement ad befallen Flavie.

s young man is a power," said she to herself; "we shall

was why she wore feathers in her hair, put on her y gray and pink dress, allowed her shoulders to be seen h her black mantilla, and was careful to have Céleste m a simple ruffled dress, and her hair braided

At half-past four Théodose was at his post; he had assumed air, partly servile, and a soft voice; and first he went Thuillier into the garden.

"My friend, I have not the least doubt of your success, but last once more impress upon you at all times to keep absolute silence. If any one questions you about Céleste give ve answers, such as you learned so well at the bureau."

"All right!" answered Thuillier. "But is it a certainty?"

"You will see the dessert I have prepared for you. Be above all. Here are the Minards; leave me to decoy m. Bring them here, and then leave."

saluting them, la Peyrade kept close by M. the Mayor, an opportune moment he took him aside and said to

Monsieur the Mayor, a man of your political importance

does not face the ennui of dining here without having some end in view: I do not for a moment ask your motives, I have no right so to do; it is not my part here below to interfere in the business of this world's powers; but pardon my boldness and deign to listen to the counsel that I can give you. If I am able to do you a service to-day, you are in a position to render me two to-morrow, so if you listen to me a moment it is in my own interest. Our friend Thuillier is in despair at being a nobody, and he is eager to become something, a personage in the arrondissement."

"Ah!" said Minard.

"Oh! nothing much; he wants the nomination as a member of the Municipal Council. I know that Phellion, divining an equal advantage from doing him a service, intends to propose our friend as a candidate. Well, perhaps you might find it necessary to your own projects to be forehanded with him. The nomination of Thuillier will not only be favorable to you—I should think it would also be agreeable; he will do well in the council; there are worse than he there. And then if he is indebted to you for his advancement he will see through your eyes; he will regard you as the shining light of the town . . ."

"My dear sir, I thank you," said Minard; "you have rendered me a service which I shall never forget, and that proves to me . . ."

"That I don't care for the Phellions," replied la Peyrade, profiting by the hesitation of the mayor, who feared he might say something which the advocate would find distasteful. "I hate people who trade on their honesty and coin money with noble sentiments."

"You thoroughly understand them," said Minard; "they are sycophants. That man's life for the past ten years is explained by that scrap of red ribbon," added the mayor, showing his own button-hole.

"Look out, though," said the lawyer, "his son loves Céleste and holds the citadel."

"Yes, but my son has twelve thousand livres of income himself——"

[illegible] said the advocate, with a shrug. "Mademoiselle [illegible] said the other day that [illegible] wanted at least that from [illegible] Celeste. And, besides, before six months are [illegible] you will see that Thuillier will have a freehold bringing [illegible] thousand francs a year."

"[illegible] deuce! I suspected it," replied the mayor. "Well, [illegible] be a member of the council."

"[illegible] any case, don't mention me in the matter," said the [illegible] of the poor, who pressed forward to greet Mme. [illegible], who had just arrived. "Well, my fair lady, have [illegible] decided?"

"[illegible] waited until four o'clock, but the worthy and excellent [illegible] would not listen at all; he is too much occupied to [illegible] such a charge, and Monsieur Phellion has a letter in [illegible] Dr. Barodet, thanks him for his good intentions, and [illegible], for himself, his candidate is Monsieur Thuillier. [illegible] his influence in his favor and prays my husband to [illegible]."

"[illegible] what says your excellent spouse?"

"'I have done my duty,' he replied. 'I have been true to [illegible] conscience, and henceforth I am wholly for Thuillier.'"

"[illegible] that's all fixed then," said la Peyrade. "Forget my [illegible] the whole credit of the idea is your own."

[illegible] turning to Mme. Colleville, with a most respectful [illegible], he said:

"Madame, be so good as to introduce me to our good [illegible] Colleville; I propose a little surprise for Thuillier, and [illegible] be in the secret."

[illegible] Peyrade played his part for Colleville's benefit, Mme. [illegible] was hearing such remarks as made her ears tingle; [illegible] a mystery to her.

"[illegible]h I knew what Messrs. Colleville and la Peyrade are [illegible] they laugh so much?" said Mme. Thuillier, [illegible] looking out through the window.

"[illegible] are speaking just such rubbish as all men talk be[illegible] themselves," answered Mlle. Thuillier, who frequently [illegible] the men by a kind of instinct natural in old maids.

"He is incapable of such a thing," said Phellion, gravely: "for Monsieur de la Peyrade is one of the most virtuous young people whom I have met. I put him on a par with Félix; nay, I wish that my son had a little of Monsieur Théodose's pretty piety."

"He is, in fact, a man of merit, who will get on," observed Minard. "As for me, my vote—I won't say my protection—is his."

"He spends more in lamp-oil than bread," said Dutocq; "that I know."

"His mother, if she still survives, must be proud of him," said Mme. Phellion, sententiously.

"He is a real treasure for us," added Thuillier; "and then how modest he is; he is unconscious of his own merits."

"I can answer for one thing," added Dutocq; "and that is, that he has borne himself nobly under misfortune, but he has undoubtedly suffered."

"Poor young man!" cried Zélie, "how these things pain me!"

"You may confide to him your secrets and your fortune," said Thuillier; "in these days that is not such a small thing to say of the best of men."

"It is Colville who is making him laugh," cried Dutocq.

Just then Colville and la Peyrade were at the bottom of the garden, the best friends in the world.

"Gentlemen," said Brigitte, "soup and the King must not be kept waiting: hand in the ladies."

Five minutes after this pleasant jest, inherited from the janitor's lodge, Brigitte had the satisfaction of seeing around her table all the principal characters of this drama with the exception of the dreadful Cérizet. The portrait of this old cash-bag maker might perhaps be incomplete if we omitted a description of one of her best dinners.

The characteristics of the middle-class cook in 1840 is necessary to a picture of its manners; good housekeepers may learn a lesson therefrom. A woman does not for twenty years occupy herself in making cash-bags without looking up

means of filling a few. Now Brigitte had this peculi-
with the thrift necessary for laying the foundation of
ane she combined that of dispensing sufficient for nece-
. Her relative extravagance, when it had to do with her
er or Céleste, was the antipodes of miserliness. As a
she often commiserated herself for not being avaricious.
r last dinner she had related that after struggling for
minutes and suffering martyrdom, she had ended by
g ten francs to a poor workwoman who she knew had
! for two days. "Nature," said she artlessly, "was
er than reason."

soup offered was *bouillon*, extremely pale; for, even on
asion such as this, she had enjoined the cook to make
of it; for, as the beef had to serve the family on the
w and the day after, the less of its juices it furnished to
bouillon, the more substantial it would be. The beef,
rdone, was always removed at a little speech of Brigitte's,
huillier essayed to carve:

guess it's rather tough; never mind, Thuillier, no one
are to eat of it, we have other things."

e bouillon was, in fact, flanked by four dishes standing
t copper double plates off which the silver-plating was
. At this dinner, called the "candidacy," the first course
composed of two ducks *aux olives*, having opposite a
pie *aux quenelles* and an eel with tartar sauce, with a
deau en endive. The second course had for its centre-
a fine roast goose stuffed with chestnuts, a corn-salad
mented with slices of red beet, opposite a dish of cup-
ards, and a tureen of sweet turnips looked down upon a
of macaroni. This dinner, well suited for a janitor's
ng festivities, could be procured for, at the most
y francs; that left over would keep the house for two
, and Brigitte would say:

Dame! when one receives, the money flies! It is fright-

table was lighted by two hideous silver-plated candle-
s with four branches, in which twinkled that economical

candle called the *Aurore*. The linen was resplendently white, and the old thread-pattern plate was a paternal heritage, the fruit of a purchase made during the Revolution by old Thuillier, and had served in the quasi restaurant he had kept in his lodge, but which was suppressed in 1816 in all the other. Thus the fare harmonized with the dining-room, with the house, and with the Thuilliers, whose fate it was not to rise above their own level. The Minards, the Colleville, and Peyrade exchanged a few smiles, which communicated a satirical but not expressed thought. They alone knew of a superior luxury, and the Minards said plainly enough that they had some afterthoughts in accepting such a dinner. M. Peyrade, who sat beside Flavie, whispered her:

"You see they need some one who can teach them how to live; you are eating what is commonly called cag-mag, an old friend of mine. But these Minards; what horrible cupidity! Your daughter would be lost to you. These parvenus have the vices of the great nobles of other days, without the elegance. Their son, who has twelve thousand francs to come, can well find a family in the *Polesse* set without dragging their rake here on speculation. It is a pleasure to play upon such people as if they were a bass or a clarionet."

Flavie listened with a smile; she did not remove her foot when Théodose lightly pressed it with his boot.

"That is to give you a hint of what is going on," said he, "let us communicate by the pedal. You ought to know me thoroughly since this morning. I am not the man to indulge in petty tricks."

Flavie had not been spoiled by superiority. The keen and unembarrassed manner of Théodose had dazzled this woman, to whom the adroit conjurer had presented the contest in a manner that left her no choice but yes or no. She must accept him or reject him absolutely; and as his conduct was the result of calculation, he watched with a soft glance but with an internal sagacity the effect of his fascination.

As the dishes of the second course were being removed, Minard, afraid that Phellion would forestall him, said to Thuillier, very gravely:

My dear Thuillier, if I accepted your dinner it was be-
I had an important communication to make to you, one
honors you so much that I choose to have as witnesses
our guests."

Thuillier became pale.

"You have obtained for me the Cross?" cried he, as he
back from Theodose, and to prove that he was not want-
eagerness.

"You will have that some day," replied the mayor; "but
more than that. The Cross is a favor due to the good
of a citizen, whereas the question now is, so to say,
election d, to the good will of your fellow-citizens.
good, a great number of the electors of your arrondisse-
have cast their eyes upon you, and wish to honor you
their confidence by charging you with the representa-
of this arrondissement in the Municipal Council of Paris,
, as all the world knows, is the council general of the
."

"Bravo!" said Dutocq.

Bellion rose.

"Monsieur the Mayor has anticipated me," said he, in a
broken with emotion; "but it is so flattering to our
to be the object of interest on the part of all good
, and to obtain the public vote from all parts of the
, that I must not complain of being the second in line;
, I bow to the power of authority!" (And he bowed
fully to Minard.) "Yes, Môsieur Thuillier, many
will think of giving you their votes in that portion of the
dissement where I have my humble Penates; and you
the particular advantage of being designated by an illus-
man (*sensation*), by a man whom we designed to honor
sake of one of the most distinguished inhabitants of
arrondissement, who was, I might say, for twenty years
father, who was in his lifetime a royal councillor, and our
sentative in the Municipal Council. I allude to the late
Monsieur Popinot. But his nephew, Doctor Bianchon, one
our glories, has, owing to his pressing duties, declined to

serve us. He thanked us for the compliment paid, but indicated for our suffrages the candidate of Monsieur the Mayor, as being, in his opinion, the more capable from the position he formerly occupied."

And Phellion sat down amid a murmur of approbation.

"Thuillier, you may count on your old friend," said Colleville.

At this moment the guests were all touched by the sight presented by old Brigitte and Mme. Thuillier. Brigitte, pale as if about to faint, let the slow tears run unheeded down her cheeks, tears of deepest joy; and Mme. Thuillier sat as though struck by a thunderbolt, her eyes fixed. All at once the old maid sprang into the kitchen, crying to Joséphine the cook:

"Come into the cellar, my girl; we must get out the wine from behind the fagots."

"My friends," said Thuillier, in a choking voice, "this is the grandest day in my life, happier than that of my election, should I permit myself to ask the suffrages of my fellow-citizens" (*Certainly, of course*), "for I feel myself much worn out with thirty years of public service, and you may surely believe that a man of honor should consult his strength before he assumes the functions of a magistrate."

"I expected nothing less of you, Monsieur Thuillier," cried Phellion. "Pardon me, this is the first time in my life that I ever interrupted any one, and one who was formerly my superior, too; but under the circumstances——"

"Accept, accept," cried Zélie. "For goodness sake accept! We need such men as you for governor."

"Resign yourself, my chief," said Dutocq; "and long live our future councillor——But we have nothing to drink——"

"Well, all is said," replied Minard, "you are our candidate, eh?"

"You expect too much of me," said Thuillier.

"That's all right," cried Colleville; "a man who for thirty years has worked in the galleys of the Bureau of Finance should be a treasure to the town."

"You are much too modest," said young Minard; "your

ity is not unknown to us: it is a proverb at the bureau."

As you all insist——"

The King will be well pleased with our choice, I can assure said Minard, interrupting Thuillier in a pompous er.

Gentlemen," said la Peyrade, "will you permit a recent bitant of the Saint-Jacques faubourg to make a little rk, which may not be unimportant?"

The general estimation of the abilities of the advocate d a deep silence.

The influence of the mayor of an adjoining arrondisse- t, famous also in ours, where he has left such an excellent ory: that of Monsieur Phellion, the oracle—yes, I re- it, the oracle"—noticing a negative gesture of Phellion's f his battalion; the influence of Monsieur Colleville, rful by his frank urbanity; that of Monsieur the Clerk Peace, no less valuable; and my own humble efforts, re pledges of success, but they are not success itself. btain a speedy triumph let us here and now pledge ves to keep a profound silence as to our intentions. rwise, we should excite, without willing or desir- it, envy and the like passions, which would create ur path obstacles necessary to be overcome. The po- l sentiment of the new social organization, its very dation,—its symbol, and the guaranty of its exist- —lies in sharing power with the middle-classes who the real strength of modern society, the seat of morality, ood feeling, of intelligent industry, but we must overlook the part that the franchise, extended to nearly office, has aroused ambitions, and the rage 'to be some- '—if I may be allowed the phrase,—in social depths h should never have been agitated. Some would see good r efforts, others evil; it is not for me to decide the ques- in the presence of minds before whose superiority I bow; tent myself by pointing out the dangers our friend must unter. It is barely a week since the death of our honor- representative in the Municipal Council, and the district

is already in a tumult from petty ambitions. Each one desires to be prominent at whatever cost. The writ for election has not take effect for another month. From now until then imagine the intrigues! Do not offer, I entreat you, our friend Thuillier to the blows of his opponents; let us not deliver him over to public discussion, that modern harpy, the trumpet of calumny and envy, the pretext of inimical feelings calculated to belittle all that is great, that dishonors all that is sacred, and befouls the respectable. Rather let us do as the third party is doing in the Chamber—vote and say nothing!"

"He speaks well," said Phellion to his neighbor Dutocq. "And how sensible too."

Envy had turned Minard's son yellow and green.

"Perfectly true and well said," cried Minard.

"Unanimously carried," said Colleville. "Gentlemen, we are men of honor. It is enough that we understand each other."

"The end justifies the means," said Phellion, emphatically.

At this moment Mlle. Thuillier appeared, followed by her two domestics. She had the key of the cellar in her belt, and three bottles of champagne, three of old hermitage, and one of Malaga wine were placed upon the table; but she herself carried a little bottle with respectful care, much like a fairy Gargosse, which she placed before herself. In the midst of the hilarity caused by this abundance of choice cheer, a fruit of her gratitude—in striking contrast to her usual fortnightly niggardliness—poured out by the old maid in the delirium of her joy, there arrived numerous dishes of dessert: a heaped-up dish of raisins, figs, almonds, and nuts;* pyramids of oranges, confections, candied fruits brought from the depths of her closets, and which, but for the circumstances, would have never figured on the table-cloth.

"Céleste, they will bring you a bottle of brandy that my father got in 1802; make an orange salad!" cried she to her sister-in-law. "Monsieur Phellion, open the champagne;

* *Quatre-mendiants*—"the four beggars"; a popular French dessert.

...ttle is for you three! Monsieur Dutocq, take this one!
...r Colleville, you can make the corks pop!"
...two maids distributed champagne glasses, claret glasses,
...ieur glasses, for Josephine carried in three more bot-
... Bordeaux.
...e year of the comet!" cried Thuillier. "Gentlemen,
...ve made my sister lose her head."
... this evening punch and cakes," she said. "I have
...t to the drug-store to buy some tea. My God! if only
...known that this dinner had to do with an election,"
...ed she to her sister-in-law. "I would have served a
..."
...neral laugh greeted this speech.
..." we have a goose," said Minard's son, laughing.
... an ill wind that blows no one good,"* exclaimed Mme.
...r, as she saw *marrons glacés* and *meringues* handed
...
... Thuillier's face was blazing; she was a superb sight;
...d a sister's love assumed such a frenzied expression.
... those who know her it is quite touching," remarked
... Colleville.
... glasses were filled, they looked at each other; they
...l to expect a toast, whereupon la Peyrade said:
... us drink to something sublime!"
...ooked up in astonishment.
... Mademoiselle Brigitte."
...arose, touched glasses, and cried: "*Vive Mademoiselle*
...*er.*" So surely can the expression of a true sentiment
... enthusiasm.
...r a toast by Phellion to M. Minard and his wife, Thuil-
...oposed:
... King and the royal family; I add nothing, the toast
...l."
... the election of my brother," said Mlle. Thuillier.
... im going to make you laugh," said la Peyrade in
...'s ear, as he arose.

* *Les charrettes y versent*—the carts are unloading.

"To th[illegible] we owe our hapt[illegible] and wives."

After [illegible] toast, Colleville, already gay, [illegible]

"W[illegible]"

The [illegible] profound silence.

"G[illegible] strength and grandeur of dynastic [illegible]"

The [illegible] of admiration over the surpr[illegible] of the wines.

After [illegible] unimportant toasts, Céleste C[illegible]

"Mamma, [illegible] to give a toast?"

The poor girl had seen the stupefied face of her godmother; she, the mistress of the house, with the expression of a dog in doubt which master to obey; her gaze wandering from the face of her terrible sister-in-law to that of Thuillier, [illegible] oblivious of herself. But the joy on a face so unaccustomed to its visits had the effect of a pale wintry sun behind a mist, which grudgingly shone through the flabby, faded features. Her ill-dressed hair and dingy attire—combined with her woeful look of joy—stimulated the affection of the young Céleste, who, alone in the world, knew the value of [illegible] woman's heart; suffering from all, yet consoling herself in God and this child alone.

"Let the dear child give her little toast," said la Peyrade to Mme. Colleville.

"Go on, my daughter," said Colleville; "we have the hermitage yet to drink, and it's hoary with age."

"To my good godmother!" said the girl, inclining her glass respectfully before Mme. Thuillier and holding it toward her.

The poor woman, quite scared, looked through a veil of tears, alternately, at her sister, and her husband; but her position in the family was so well understood and the homage paid by innocence to weakness had such a lovely side to it that the emotion was general: every man rose and bowed to Mme. Thuillier.

Ah! Céleste, I wish I had a kingdom to lay at your
d Felix Phellion.
ood Phellion shed a tear, and even Dutocq wa-
:
at a charming child!" said Madame [illegible] Thuillier,
and embracing her sister-in-law.
ow, it's my turn," said Colleville, posing [illegible] athlete.
to me. "To friendship! [illegible]
asses. Good [illegible] the flower of social
Empty your [illegible] To another
tival the day [illegible]!"
at is in that [illegible] of Mlle. Thuil-

," said she, "is one of my three bottles of Madame
oux Liqueur; the second [illegible] Céleste's wedding, and
for the christening of her first child."
ister has lost her head," said Thuillier to Colleville.
dinner ended with a toast by Thuillier, suggested to
Theodose, when the Malaga sparkled in the glasses
many rubies.
eville, gentlemen, drank to *friendship*; for myself, I
in this generous wine, *[illegible] friends*."
ers greeted this speech; but Dutocq remarked aside to
se:
murder to pour such Malaga down such a class of
"
"If we could only imitate this, my dear," said Mi-
vite to her spouse, making her glass [illegible] the manner
she sucked down the Spanish liqueur; "what a for-
hould make."
had reached her highest state of incandescence; she
ightful.
answered Minard, "but ours is made."
't you think, sister, that we had better take coffee in
?" said Brigitte to her sister.
Thuillier obediently assumed the air of mistress of
and arose.

"Ah! you are a great wizard," said Flavie Colleville to la Peyrade, as she took his arm to go to the dining-room.

"Yet I care to bewitch you alone; and, indeed, I am only taking my revenge. You are more charming to-day than ever."

"Think of Thuillier!" replied she, seeking to avoid a contest,—"Thuillier, who imagines himself a politician."

"But, my dear, a large share of the absurdities in this world are the result of just such conspiracies; the man is not so guilty in this respect as one might think. In how many families do you not see the husband, the children, and the friends of the house persuade a very silly mother that she is witty,—a mother fifty years old that she is still young and beautiful,—all of which is inconceivably tiresome to those who are not interested. One man owes his unblushing self-conceit to the idolatry of a mistress, and his persistency in writing doggerel to those who are paid to make him believe that he is a great poet. Every family has its great man; and the result is, as in the Chamber, a general obscurity, notwithstanding all the luminaries of France. Ah, well, intelligent people laugh to themselves, that is all. You are the intellect and the beauty of this little bourgeois world; that is why I worship you. But my second thought has been to draw you away from this, for I love you sincerely. And yet it is more friendship than love, although a good deal of love may have slipped in," he added, pressing her to his heart, in the retirement of the window-recess to which he had led her.

"Madame Phellion will play the piano," cried Colleville. "We must all dance to-night—the bottles, Brigitte's twenty-sous-pieces, and our little girls. I'll go and fetch my clarionet." He handed his empty coffee-cup to his wife, and smiled to see her on such good terms with la Peyrade.

"What have you done and said to my husband?" asked Flavie of the seducer.

"Must we tell each other all our secrets?"

"You do not love me, then," said she with the sly coquetry of a woman who has almost made up her mind.

"Well, since you tell me all your secrets," said he, letting
-elf out in a spirit of Provençal gayety, always apparently
harming, so natural, so unaffected, "I would not conceal
you a pain in my heart." He led her to a window and
, smiling:

Colleville, poor man, has seen in me the artist crushed
these bourgeois; silent before them because I was mis-
-stood, misjudged, repelled; but he felt the heat of the
fire which was devouring me. Yes, I am," said he in
of intense conviction, "an artist in words after the
er of Berryer; I could make juries weep by weeping
f, for I am as nervous as a woman. Then your husband,
looks upon the middle-classes with horror, made game of
with me; we began by laughing, but eventually became
, and he found me as strong as himself. I told him of
me to make *something* of Thuillier; I showed him all
efit he would derive from controlling a political man-
f only, said I, 'to be called a *de* Colleville, and to put
charming wife in the position I should like to see her, as
fe of a receiver-general, whence you could become a
, for to reach your proper position, all that is needed
spend a few years in the Upper or Lower Alps, in some
village, where everybody will love you, and where your
ll captivate everybody.' And this," he added, "you will
of accomplishing, if you give your dear Céleste to a
who has influence in the Chamber. Good reasons dis-
in a jest have the power of penetrating deeper into
minds than if soberly stated; so Colleville and I be-
the best friends in the world. Don't you remember
d to me at the table: 'Wretch, you have stolen my
By the end of the evening we shall be theeing and
. I shall before long invite him to a jolly party, such
ys allures artists who have become broken to domestic
d get him to kick over the traces. It will make us as
friends as he and Thuillier are, or more so, for I have
n that Thuillier will be bursting with jealousy when he
s rosette. This, my charmer, is what a deep sentiment
ne the courage to do. Colleville will adopt me; so

that I may visit at your house by his invitation. But what wouldn't you make me do? Lick lepers, swallow live toads, seduce Brigitte—yes, I would impale my heart on that picket-fence, if I needed her for a crutch to drag me to your knees!"

"This morning," said she, "you frightened me."

"And this evening you are reassured. Yes," said he, "you will never suffer harm from me."

"You are, I must own, a most extraordinary man."

"Oh, no; my smallest as well as my greatest efforts are but the reflection of the flame which you have kindled; I intend to become your son-in-law, so that we may never part. My wife, oh, my God! she could be no more than a machine to bear children; but the supreme being, the divinity, will be you," he whispered in her ear.

"You are Satan!" said she, with a sort of terror.

"No, I am something of a poet, like all the people of my country. Come, be my Joséphine. I'll come and see you to-morrow at two o'clock; I have an ardent desire to see where you sleep, the furniture you use, the color of the hangings, how you arrange things around you, to see the pearl in its shell."

He slipped cleverly away after these words, not giving her a chance to reply.

Flavie, who in all her life had not been made love to in the passionate language of romance, sat still, but happy; her heart palpitated; she told herself it was difficult to resist such influence. For the first time Théodose had appeared in new trousers, gray silk stockings and pumps, a black silk waistcoat, black silk cravat, on the bow of which sparkled a tasteful gold pin. He wore a fashionable new coat, and yellow gloves that set off his white wristbands. He was the only person present who had the deportment of a gentleman; in fact, he was the only one with any style or air among the now rapidly arriving guests.

Madame Pron, *née* Barniol, came with two school-girls aged seventeen, confided to her motherly care by families residing in Bourbon and Martinique. M. Pron, a professor of rhetoric

school managed by priests, was of the Phellion model, but d of being superficial, indulging in phrases and demon- tions, and posing as a model, he was dry and sententious. sieur and Madame Pron, the shining lights of the Phel- salon, received on Mondays. They were very closely con- ed with the Phellions through the Barniols. Although a ssor, little Pron danced. The great renown of the rave institution, with which Monsieur and Madame Phel- had been connected for twenty years, had increased under management of Mademoiselle Barniol, the ablest and st of its sub-mistresses. Monsieur Pron enjoyed much in- nce in that part of the quarter bounded by the boulevard Mont-Parnasse, the Luxembourg, and the Rue de Sèvres. soon as he saw his friend, Phellion took him uncere- ously by the arm, led him into a corner, and initiated him the Thuillier conspiracy. After a conversation of ten utes, they sought Thuillier; and the recess of the window osite to that in which Flavie remained absorbed in her ctions harbored, without doubt, a trio worthy in its way hat of the three Swiss in *William Tell*.

Do you see," Théodose had just said to Flavie, "the honest pure Phellion intriguing? For a sufficient reason, an st man will wade in the muddiest waters. He has caught to little Pron, and Pron is keeping pace with him, solely interest of Félix Phellion. Let us separate them; they been together ten minutes, and young Minard has been ling round them like a mad bulldog."

lix, still under the deep emotion imparted by Céleste's rous act and the cry that sprang from the girl's heart, gh no one but Mme. Thuillier still bore it in mind, be- inspired by one of those ingenious impulses which are onest wiles of true love; but he was not to the "manner : mathematics had made him absent-minded. He sta- d himself by Mme. Thuillier, imagining that Céleste d be attracted thither. This ruse was admirably success-

his deep calculation, without a corresponding passion, was

in Félix's favor, as the advocate Minard, who regarded Céleste solely from a mercenary point of view, had no such sudden inspiration, and sipped his coffee and talked politics with Laudigeois, Barniol, and Dutocq by the command of his father, who was thinking of the election of the legislature of 1842.

"Who could help loving Céleste?" said Félix to Mme. Thuillier.

"Poor little dear, no one in the world loves me but her," replied the poor slave, restraining her tears.

"Oh! madame, we both love you," said the candid Mathieu Laensberg, smiling.

"What are you talking about?" asked Céleste of her godmother.

"My child," replied the pious victim, drawing her godchild down to her and kissing her on the forehead, "he said you both loved me."

"Do not be angry at my presumption, mademoiselle," said the future candidate for the Academy of Sciences; "but allow me the honor of realizing it. It is my nature—injustice revolts me deeply. Yes, the Saviour of the world was right in promising the future to the meek heart, to the sacrificed lamb. A man who had merely loved you, Céleste, would have adored you after your noble action at the table. But innocence is the sole consolation of the martyr. You are a good young girl and you will become one of those women who are at once the glory and the happiness of a family. Happy the man whom you will choose."

"Dear godmother, with what eyes does Monsieur Félix see me?"

"He appreciates you, my little angel; I shall pray God for both of you."

"If you knew how happy I am because my father can be of service to Monsieur Thuillier! and how much I desire to be useful to your brother!"

"Then," said Céleste, "you love the whole family?"

"Certainly," replied Félix.

True love always shrouds itself in the mysteries of modesty, even in its expression; it is its own evidence. It has no need, as false love has, of publishing itself to the world; and if an observer had been able to glide into the Thuillier salon, he could have written a book in contrasting the two scenes,—in [illegible]g the deep scheming of Théodose, and the simplicity of Félix. One was nature, the other artfulness, the true and [illegible] false face to face.

Noticing her daughter glowing with happiness, exhaling [illegible]ure through every pore of her face, beautiful as a young girl gathering the first roses of an indirect declaration, Flavie [illegible] a pang of jealousy in her heart; she went to Céleste and whispered to her:

"You are not behaving at all nicely, my daughter, everybody is observing you; you will compromise yourself by talking so long with Monsieur Félix without knowing whether it [illegible] our approval."

"But, mamma, my godmother is here."

"Ah! pardon me, dear friend," said Mme. Colleville, "I did not see you."

"Like all the rest of the world," replied the golden-tongued St. John Chrysostom.

This retort stung Mme. Colleville, who took it as a barbed arrow. She glanced haughtily at Félix, and said to Céleste: "Sit there, my daughter," seating herself beside Mme. Thuillier and pointing to a chair at her side.

"I will kill myself with hard work," said Félix to Madame Thuillier, "or I shall become a member of the Academy of Sciences and make some grand discovery and thus win her [illegible]d by my fame."

"Ah," said the poor woman to herself, "if I could have had [illegible]quil and gentle scholar like him I might have developed [illegible]wly in the shadow of a retired life. Thou hast not willed it, my God; but unite and bless these children. They were [illegible] for each other."

Madame Thuillier sat pensively listening to the clatter [illegible] by her sister-in-law, a true work horse, lending her hand

to help the two servants clear the table, take everything out of the dining-room, to make room for the dancers, vociferating like the captain of a frigate on his quarter-deck while preparing for an attack: "Have you any currant syrup? Run out and buy some orgeat!" or, "There's not enough glasses! and too little *eau rougie!* (wine and water); take those six bottles of *vin ordinaire* that I have just brought up and make more. Keep an eye on Collinet, the porter, that he doesn't get at anything! Caroline, my girl, wait at the sideboard; you shall have a slice of ham if they keep it up till the morning hours. But no waste, mind you. Keep an eye on everything. Pass the broom here, and put more oil in the lamps; don't have any accidents. Arrange the remains of the dessert, so as to make a show on the buffet! Why doesn't my sister come and help us? I can' think what she's about—the dawdle! My God! how slow she is! Here, take away these chairs; they need all the room they can get!"

The announcement of a dance at the Thuilliers' had got noised about in the Luxembourg. As a consequence the salon was full of Barniols, Collevilles, Phellions, Laudigeois, and the like.

"And you, Brigitte, are you ready?" said Colleville, rushing into the dining-room: "it is nine o'clock. They are packed as close as herrings in the salon; Cardot, his wife, his son, his daughter, and his future son-in-law have just arrived, accompanied by young Vinet, and the whole faubourg Saint-Antoine is rushing in. Can't we move the piano in here?"

And he gave the signal by piping on his clarionet, the merry notes of which were received by a hurrah in the salon.

It were useless to paint a ball of this kind. The toilettes, faces, conversations, were all in keeping with one detail which will surely suffice the least lively imagination; they were all of one character and color. They passed round, on tarnished shabby trays, common glasses filled with wine, *eau rougie*, and *eau sucrée*. At longer intervals appeared the trays bearing *orgeat* and syrups. There were five card-tables for twenty-

:layers and eighteen dancing couples. At one o'clock in
·rning Mme. Thuillier, Mlle. Brigitte, Mme. Phellion,
:er husband were dragged into a rough country dance
·n as *la Boulangère*, in which Dutocq figured with a veil
·s head, looking like a Kabyl.* When this interminable
l had lasted for a full hour, and Brigitte announced
·, they wished to carry her in triumph; but she per-
: the necessity of hiding a dozen bottles of old Bur-
· wine. Everybody was so well pleased, matrons as well
. ds, that Thuillier took occasion to say:

·ll, this morning, we little thought we should have such
·val to-night."

·e never has so much pleasure," said Cardot, "as at this
: impromptu dance. Do..t talk to me of parties at
· each one stands on his dignity."

· opinion is an axiom among the middle-classes.

·, bah!" said Madame Minard, "for me I prefer my
· way. I prefer the way of my mamma."

·· did not mean that remark for you, madame, with
·· pleasure makes her home," said Dutocq.

·· *Boulangère* finished, Théodose drew Dutocq from the
·, where he was preparing to eat a slice of tongue, and

·t's be off, for early to-morrow we must see Cérizet, and
all about the matter of which we both must think; it is
uite so easily managed as Cérizet seems to think."

And why?" asked Dutocq, eating his tongue sandwich
went toward the salon.

·u do not know the laws, then?"

know enough to be aware of the dangers of the busi-
If the notary wants the house and we filch it from
has ways and means by which to recover it; he can
·· place of a recorded creditor. By the present state
law of mortgage, when a house is sold at the behest of
·s, if the amount realized is not sufficient to pay all
·rs, they have the right to bid it in; and the notary, once
t, will be on the lookout."

* Berber, native of Barbary.

"Indeed," said la Peyrade, "this deserves some attention."

"Well," said the clerk, "we will go and see Cérizet."

These words, "We will go and see Cérizet," were heard by the advocate Minard, who was close behind the two conspirators, but they conveyed no meaning to his mind. These men were so far removed from his path in life that he heard without understanding.

"This has been one of the greatest days in our life," said Brigitte to her brother, when, at half-past two o'clock, in the morning, they were alone in the deserted salon. "What an honor to be chosen by your fellow-citizens."

"Make no mistake, though, Brigitte; we owe all this, my child, to one man——"

"To whom?"

"Our friend la Peyrade."

It was not on the next day, Monday, but the next but one, Tuesday, that Dutocq and Théodose called on Cérizet, the fact having been called to the latter's attention that on Sundays and Mondays he took advantage of a total lack of business, these days being devoted to dissipation by the common people. The house to which their steps were bent is a striking feature of the faubourg Saint-Jacques; and it is fully as important to be studied here as the house of Thuillier or that of Phellion. It has never been known, and no commission has inquired into, why or for what reason or cause certain quarters of Paris sink into vice and vulgarity, morally as well as physically; how the old centres of the Court and the church, the Luxembourg, and the Latin quarter, have become what they are to-day, in spite of the finest palaces in the world, in spite of the soaring dome of Sainte-Geneviève, that of Mansard's on the Val-de-Grâce, and the charms of the Jardin des Plantes. One asks himself why the elegance of life has fled—why the Phellion and Thuillier houses swarm here, and boarding-houses displace the formerly numerous noble and religious edifices; and why mud and unclean forms of trade and poverty have fastened on this hill, instead of

ading out upon the plain beyond the old and noble city. ngel whose beneficent sway had blessed this quarter, once l, the lowest form of usury rushed in. To the Councillor inot succeeded a Cérizet; and, stranger still, a good r for study, the effects produced, socially speaking, were different. Popinot loaned without interest, and was g to lose; Cérizet lost nothing, and compelled the unates to work hard and learn wisdom. The poor adored not, but they did not hate Cérizet. Here is the lowest d of Parisian finance. At the top the firm of Nucingen, Kellers, the du Tillets, the Mongenods; a little further , the Palmas, the Gigonnets, the Gobsecks; still lower, Samanons, the Chaboisseaus, the Barbets; then, at last, r the pawnshops, this king of usurers, who spreads his nets corners of the streets to entangle all the various forms of y and miss none—Cérizet.

e embroidered coat should have already led you to im- e the den of this fugitive of the joint-stock company and the police court.

This house, blotched with nitre, the walls of which oozed a l humidity, was enameled all over with huge slabs of mold. ding at the corner of the Rue des Postes and the Rue des des, it showed a first-floor, painted a bright red, partly oc- d by a vendor of the commonest kind of wine; the win- decorated with red calico curtains; furnished with a n counter, and armed with formidable bars.

Above the door of an odious court hung a frightful lantern, which was painted "Night Lodgings Here." The outer displayed iron cross-clamps, which showed the insecurity building of which the wine merchant was the owner, who occupied the entresol in addition to the store. Ma- the Widow Poiret (*née* Michonneau) kept the furnished s, which comprised the second, third, and fourth floors, ged in chambers for the use of laborers and the poorest of students.

zet occupied one room on the first floor and one in the resol, to which he ascended by an interior stairway; this

upper room looked out upon a horrible courtyard, from which arose mephitic odors. Cérizet gave to the Widow Poiret forty francs a month for his breakfast and dinner; he thus conciliated the hostess of this boarding-house; he made himself acceptable to the wine-dealer, too, by procuring him an enormous trade in his wines and spirits, profits realized before the sun was up. The counting-rooms of the Sieur Cadenet were opened even before those of Cérizet, who began his operations on Tuesday, by three o'clock in the morning in summer and five in winter.

The opening of the Great Market, which so many of his male and female clients attended, determined Cérizet's early hours for his dismal transactions. Cadenet, in consideration of the custom of Cérizet's clients, had rented to him the two rooms for eighty francs a year, giving him a lease for twelve years, and which Cérizet alone had the right to break, without paying indemnity, at three months' notice. Every day Cadenet brought up a bottle of excellent wine for the dinner of this precious tenant; and when Cérizet was "short," he had only to say: "Cadenet, my good fellow, let me have a hundred crowns." But he always faithfully repaid them. Cadenet was said to have proof that the Widow Poiret had put in Cérizet's hands two thousand francs for investment; this may explain his rapid increase in business.

The money-lender was perfectly safe in his den, where he could have, if needed, sufficient assistance. For on certain mornings there would be not less than sixty to eighty people, men and women, either in the wine-dealer's, in the court, sitting on the stairs, or in his office, for the distrustful Cérizet would admit only six persons at once. The first comers were the first served, and, as each one was only admitted according to his number, the wine-dealer or his head-helper chalked it on the men's hats and on the backs of the women.

They would sell, like cabmen in a line, one number high up for one lower down, with something to boot. On certain days when business was pressing in the Market, a head number would fetch as much as a glass of brandy and a

The numbers as they went out of Cérizet's office called ... succeeding numbers, and, if any dispute arose, it was ...ieted by Cadenet saying:

... you succeed in getting the police here, will you get ...ny faster? *He* would shut up shop."

...et's name was *He*. When, in the course of the day, fortunate, despairing woman, without an atom of bread ... house, seeing her children pale with hunger, would to borrow ten or twenty sous:

... *He* here?" she would anxiously ask the wine-dealer or ...ad-helper.

...denet, a short, fat man, dressed in blue, wearing black ...leeves over his arms, and a barkeeper's apron, with a ... his head, seemed like an angel to these poor mothers, ... he would reply:

H... told me you were an honest woman and that I might ...ou forty sous. You know what you must do." And, ...nge thing, *He* was blessed, even as had been Popinot ... him.

... they cursed Cérizet on Sunday morning, when accounts ...traightened up; they cursed him still more on Saturday, ...t became necessary to work in order to pay the sum bor-...l, with interest. Still he was Providence, he was God, ...Tuesday to Friday, every week.

... office was formerly the kitchen of the next story; the ... was bare, smoke still discolored the once whitewashed ... and ceiling; the walls, along which he had placed ..., and the sandstone floor absorbed and exhaled ...re alternately. The fireplace, the chimney of which ...emained, had been replaced by an iron stove in which ... burned sea-coal when it was cold. Under this chim-...ace was a raised platform, about six inches high, and ...t square, on which was placed a table worth twenty ...nd a wooden armchair furnished with a round green-... cushion. Behind his seat Cérizet had sheathed the ...ith ship-planks. He had also put up a small white ...n screen, to keep off the draughts from the door and

the window; but this screen—with two leaves—did not shut off the heat from the stove. The window was furnished with inside shutters of iron and enormously thick, and fastened with an iron bar. The door commanded respect by a similar armor.

At the end of the room, in an angle, was a spiral stair brought from some demolished store and bought on the Rue Chapon by Cadenet, who had fitted it into the entresol. To prevent all communication with the second floor, Cérizet had stipulated that the door opening on to the landing should be walled up. The place had thus become a fortress. On the floor above, Cérizet had his chamber, which was furnished with a cheap carpet, a student's bed, a commode, two chairs, an armchair, and an iron chest, a sort of secretary, the work of an excellent mechanic, which had come into his hands. He shaved himself before a glass on the mantel. He owned two pairs of muslin sheets and six cotton shirts; the rest of his attire being of equal elegance. Once or twice Cadenet had seen Cérizet dressed as a fashionable dandy; so it must be that he kept hidden away in the bottom drawer of his bureau a complete disguise in which he could go to the opera, or see society and yet not be recognized, for, but for his voice, Cadenet would have asked him: "What can I do for you?"

What was most pleasing to the customers of Cérizet was his joviality, his repartees. He spoke their language.

Cérizet, Cadenet, and his two helpers lived in the bosom of frightful misery, but preserved the calmness of undertakers in the midst of the heirs of the deceased, of old sergeants of the Guard in the midst of the dead; they no more shudder when they heard the cries of hunger or of despair than do surgeons when they hear their patients in the hospitals; they said, as the soldiers and the nurses said: "Have patience, a little courage! Be brave! No use to kill yourself! One can get used to anything; have a little reason!"

Although Cérizet took the precaution of hiding the money necessary for his morning's operations in the double seat of the chair on which he sat, never taking out more than one hundred

[illegible] at a time, which he put in his trousers pocket, and [illegible] between the exit of one batch of [illegible] and the entry [illegible] keeping his door locked and not opening it until [illegible] was in his pocket—as a matter of fact, he need have [illegible] nothing from the numerous despairs which found their [illegible] to this rendezvous of money. Undoubtedly, there are [illegible] ways of being honest and virtuous, and the "Monograph [illegible] Vertu"* has no other basis than this social axiom. A [illegible] violates his conscience, he is wanting in a feeling of [illegible]; he loses a fine sense of honor, which, however, does [illegible] bring him into general disrepute; he fails, finally, in com[illegible] honesty; and if he falls into the hands of the police, he [illegible] not yet been convicted by the criminal court; even after [illegible] declared guilty by a jury he may carry to the galleys [illegible] species of honor which exists among scoundrels, which [illegible] in betraying no secrets, in sharing loyally, and in [illegible] the same risks. Well, this last trace of integrity—[illegible] may be, perhaps, the result of calculation and necessity, [illegible] possession of which offers certain chances of respect to the [illegible], and of a return to decency—existed in perfection between Cérizet and his clients. Cérizet never made a mistake, [illegible] did his poor borrowers. They refused each other nothing, either of capital or interest. Many times Cérizet, who was born one of the people, had corrected one week the unseen error of a previous week, to the benefit of some poor devil who had not discovered it. He passed for a dog, but he was an honest dog; his word in the midst of that city of sorrows was sacred. A woman died who owed thirty francs.

"There are my profits," said he to the assemblage, "and you howl at me! Nevertheless I shall not trouble the young brats; in fact, Cadenet has taken them bread and sour wine."

Since that, a smart business stroke, it was said of him in the faubourgs:

"He's not such a bad sort."

* The *Monographie de la vertu;* a work in the same vein as the *Physiologie du mariage*, on which the author has been working since 1833, when it was first announced. —AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The loan on short time at high rates as practised by Cérizet is not, taking all things into account, so cruel a system as the pawnbroker's. Cérizet gave ten francs on Tuesday on condition that he received twelve on Sunday morning. In five weeks he doubled his capital, but there were frequent compromises. His kindness consisted in accepting, from time to time, eleven francs and fifty centimes, and the rest stood over. When he loaned fifty francs for sixty to a little huckster, or a hundred francs for one hundred and twenty to a vendor of peat, he ran some risk.

When they arrived at the Rue des Poules by way of the Rue des Postes, Théodose and Dutocq saw a great crowd of men and women, and, by the light from the lamps in the wine-dealer's windows, they were horrified at seeing that mass of red faces, seamed, grimy, and haggard; dejected by suffering, withered, distorted, bloated with wine, emaciated with spirits, some resigned, some threatening, some jeering, some sarcastic, and others stupefied, all clad in the miserable rags which no caricaturist can surpass in his most extravagant phantasies.

"I shall be recognized," said Théodose. "We were foolish to come here in the midst of his business."

"Especially as we did not think that Claparon might be asleep in his den, the interior of which we know nothing about. Stop, there are obstacles for you, but none for me. I may want to talk with my scribe. I shall ask him to dine with me, for there is to be a hearing to-day, and there will be no time to breakfast. We will meet at the Chaumière in one of the retreats in the garden."

"That won't do. We may be overheard without knowing it. I prefer the *Petit Rocher de Cancale.* We can get a box, and speak low."

"And if you are seen with Cérizet?"

"Well, let us go to the *Cheval Rouge,* Quai de la Tournelle."

"That is much better. No one will be there at seven o'clock."

Dutocq went alone into the midst of that congress of beggars, and he heard his own name from mouth to mouth, for

it was almost impossible that some jail-bird should be met who was not familiar with his justice-court, just as sure as Théophile might have encountered some client.

In these quarters the justice of the peace is the supreme tribunal; all legal authority is centred in his court, especially since legislation has made his decisions final in all cases involving not more than one hundred and forty francs. A passage was made for the clerk, who was feared not less than the judge himself. He saw women on the stairs, a horrible display like flowers ranged on stages, amongst them some young, pale, and suffering. The diversity of colors in fichus, bonnets, dresses, and aprons rendered the comparison more exact, perhaps, than it should be. Dutocq was nearly asphyxiated when he opened the door of the room in which already sixty persons had left their odors.

"Your number! your number!" shouted a host of voices.

"Hold your tongue!" cried a hoarse voice from the street, "that's the judge's pen!"

The most profound silence reigned. Dutocq found his victim clothed in a yellow leather waistcoat, resembling the gloves of the gendarmes, and under it another garment of shabby knitted worsted. One may imagine the sickly face protruding from such a sheath, swathed in a cheap Madras handkerchief, which left his bald forehead and neck exposed, giving to his head an aspect at once hideous and menacing, especially in the light of a cheap tallow candle.

"It can't be done in that way, Daddy Lantimèche," Cérizet was saying to a tall, old man, who appeared to be about seventy, standing in front of him, a red woolen cap in his hand, showing a bald head, and a breast covered with white hairs visible through his shabby blouse. "Tell me what you want a hundred francs for? even to get back one hundred and twenty it can't be let loose like a dog in a church."

The five other customers present—among whom were two women, one suckling her baby, the other one knitting—burst out laughing.

When he saw Dutocq, Cérizet rose respectfully, and went hastily to meet him.

"You can have time to think about it," he said to his customer, "for, see you, I am not satisfied—a hundred francs demanded by a blacksmith's helper."

"But it concerns an invention," cried the old workman.

"An invention and a hundred francs! you don't know the laws; it takes two thousand francs," said Dutocq. "You must get a patent; you need backers."

"That's the truth," said Cérizet, who was accustomed to take such chances; "go now, daddy, and come again to-morrow morning at six o'clock; we can't talk about inventions before others."

Cérizet listened to Dutocq, whose first words were:

"If all goes right, half profits."

"Why did you get up as early as this to say that to me?" asked the distrustful Cérizet, much annoyed at the mention of half profits. "You could have seen me at the office."

And he looked askance at Dutocq, who, while telling him how matters stood, speaking of Claparon and the necessity of pushing Théodose's affair as rapidly as possible, seemed confused.

"You could have seen me at the office," replied Cérizet, as he conducted Dutocq to the door.

"There's one," said he, resuming his seat, "who seems to me to have blown out his lantern so that I may not see clearly. Well, I'll give up that job as copyist. Ah! your turn, my little mother!" he exclaimed. "You invent children! That's amusing, although the trick is very common."

It is useless to recount the conversation which took place between the three associates, the more so as the plans agreed upon were in substance the same as those imparted confidentially by Théodose to Mademoiselle Thuillier; but it is essential to say that la Peyrade's craftiness seemed to dismay Cérizet and Dutocq. As the result of this conference, the banker of the poor, finding his antagonists such strong players, resolved to make sure of his own stake at the first chance. To win the

-ame by cheating expert gamblers is an inspiration to the ·ries of the green-cloth. From this came the terrible blow t la Peyrade was destined to receive.

Besides, he knew his associates; therefore in spite of the per- : ·al conflict of his mental forces, and notwithstanding the ·stant care necessary to keep up his many-faced character, ·ng wearied him more than the game he was playing with two accomplices. Dutocq was a great rogue, and Cérizet · formerly been a comedian. An impassive face like Tal- ·nd's would have caused them to break with the Provençal, ·o found himself in their clutches; and it became necessary · him to assume an ease, a confidence, a frankness, which ·tainly is the height of art. To delude the pit is an every- · triumph, but to take in Mlle. Mars, Frédérick Lemaître, Potier, Talma, and Monrose is the height of acting.

The result of this conference was to inspire la Peyrade, who · as astute as Cérizet, with a secret fear, which during the · period of this sharply played game set his blood boiling, ·d excited him at times to the point of throwing him into a ·rbid state similar to that of the gambler who watches the · the wheel when he has risked his last stake.

The day after this conference la Peyrade dined with the Thuilliers, and on the pretext of paying a visit to Madame de Saint-Foudrille, wife of a famous scholar with whom he · shed to become friendly, Thuillier carried off his wife, leav- ·ng Théodose with Brigitte. Neither Théodose, nor Thuillier, · r his sister was duped by this comedy; but the old beau of · Empire gave it the name of diplomacy.

"Young man, do not take advantage of my sister's inno- ·, respect it," said Thuillier, solemnly, as he departed.

"Have you thought, mademoiselle," said Théodose, bring- ·g his chair near the lounge on which Brigitte sat knitting, · securing the business men of the district in the interest of Thuillier?"

"How?" said she.

"You have business relations with Barbet and Métivier."

"Ah! you are right. Holy saints! but you are no simpleton!" said she, after a pause.

"When one loves people, one serves them," said he briefly and with reserve.

To get the upper hand of Brigitte would be in this long struggle like carrying the great redoubt of the Moskowa. But it was necessary to possess that old maid as the devil was said to possess man in the Middle Ages, and to prevent any possible awakening by her. He had studied and measured the ground for the past three days. Flattery, that almost infallible means in adroit hands, would not be listened to by a woman who for a very long time had known that she was without beauty. But to a man of powerful will nothing is impregnable; the Lamarques could never have failed to carry Caprea. Therefore no detail of the memorable scene which took place this evening should be omitted; all has its value—the pauses, the downcast eyes, the looks, the tones of the voice.

"You have shown your affection for us," said Brigitte, when they were alone.

"Your brother has told you?"

"No, he merely said you wished to speak with me."

"Yes, mademoiselle, for you are the man of the family; but in reflecting over this matter I find a number of dangers, such as a man risks only for those who are near and dear to him. A whole fortune is involved, thirty to forty thousand francs a year, and not in the least speculative—a freehold. The need of giving a fortune to Thuillier fascinated me from the first. I told him frankly that in working for his interests I advanced my own, as I will later also explain to you. If he wishes to be a deputy, two things are absolutely necessary: to comply with the law as to assessment, then to win some kind of celebrity for his name. If I push my devotion to the extent of assisting him in writing a book on some political question—no matter what—so as to get him that celebrity, I must needs think of his property also; it would be absurd of you to give him this house."

"What! my brother? Why, I'd put it in his name tomorrow," exclaimed Brigitte; "you don't know me."

"I do not entirely know you," said la Peyrade, "but I w enough to cause me to regret that I did not acquaint you the whole business from its origin. He will have jealous at on and we shall have a hard contest. But we must the up hand of them, and defeat all their plans."

"But what are the obstacles in this matter?" said Brigitte. Mademoiselle, the difficulty lies in my conscience—I cer- ly could not help you in this matter without first con- ting my confessor. To the world, the affair is perfectly a', and I am—you understand me—an authorized barrister, member of the bar controlled by most rigid rules; I am in- pable of suggesting an enterprise which might give rise to sure. My excuse, first, is that I don't accept a single liard t of it."

Brigitte was over the coals, her face was aflame; she broke ool, knotted it together again, and did not know how ntain herself.

"One can't do that,' said she; "in this day a rental of thousand francs means a property costing one million hundred thousand francs."

"Well, you shall see the property and estimate its probable ue, of which I can make Thuillier the owner for fifty and francs."

Well, then, if you will only get us that!" exclaimed Bri- , wound up to the highest pitch by the key of her avarice. on, my dear Monsieur Théodose——"

stopped short.

Well, mademoiselle."

You are perhaps working for your own advantage."

' if Thuillier has told you my secret, I leave your

gitte looked up.

s he told you that I love Céleste?"

No, as I'm an honest woman!" exclaimed Brigitte; "but lf was just about to speak of her."

l to offer her to me? Oh! no, may God forgive us; I her only of her free choice. No, no, all I ask of you is

your good-will and favor. Promise me as the reward for my services, as Thuillier has done, your friendship, that you will treat me as a son; should you do this I will abide by your decision in this matter; I will not consult my confessor. For two years I have studied the family with whom I wish to ally myself, and to whom I should be happy to devote my energies, for I am bound to succeed. I have noticed clearly that you have an old-time honesty, an upright and inflexible judgment; you have also a knowledge of business; and one likes to be in close connection with such qualities. With a mother-in-law of your abilities, I should find my private life relieved from a multitude of every-day details which obstruct the path to political success, if one has to busy himself with them. I admired you on Sunday evening. How beautiful you were! How you made things fly; the dining-room was cleared out in ten minutes. Without leaving your home, all was at hand for the refreshments and supper. 'There,' said I to myself, 'is a masterful woman.'"

Brigitte's nostrils dilated; she breathed in the words of the young lawyer. He looked askance at her to enjoy his triumph; he had struck a responsive chord.

"Now here is where we stand, my dear aunt, for you are an aunt in some sort——"

"Hush, you naughty fellow!" said Brigitte, "and go on."

"Well, the matter crudely is this: remark that I compromise myself by telling you these secrets, for they are confided to me as an attorney. We are both, therefore, as it were, committing a crime—*lèse-cabinet* or legal high treason. A notary of Paris (although the law does not permit speculation by notaries) was in copartnership with an architect; they bought land and built upon it; just now they are embarrassed, they made a mistake in their calculations. Among the houses built by this illegal partnership—for notaries ought not to meddle with building matters—is an excellent one not quite finished; this must consequently be sold at a great loss, so that the price asked is only one hundred thousand francs, although the land and building cost at the least four hundred thousand.

As only the interior remains to be finished, and as it is easy to estimate the cost of that, and, moreover, as the fittings are already in the hands of the builder, who will sell them very cheaply, the sum to be expended will not exceed fifty thousand francs. Now, by its location, this house, when completed, will bring in at least forty thousand francs, exclusive of taxes."

"Well, and in what does the difficulty consist?"

"Just this: the notary wants to save this piece of cake from the wreck he must abandon; under the name of a friend he is the creditor who petitions for the sale of the property by the assignee of the bankruptcy. It has not gone into court, the costs would count up so rapidly; the sale is by voluntary agreement. This notary's friend is a client of mine; my client is a poor devil who says to me: 'There's a fortune to be made out of that house by tricking the notary.'"

"That's done in trade," said Brigitte quickly.

"If this were the only obstacle," answered Théodose, "it would be as a friend of mine said to a pupil of his who complained of the difficulties encountered in producing a masterpiece of painting: 'My dear boy, were it not so footmen would paint.' But, mademoiselle, if we get the better of this notary—for he deserves it, he has compromised many private fortunes—it might be hard to do it a second time. When one purchases real estate—that is, at a low price at forced sale—the mortgagees have the right, until the expiration of a certain fixed time, to buy it in; that is, to offer a larger sum and keep the property. If this trickster can't be tricked as to the sale being a genuine one and hindered from raising the price until the time limit expires, well, then, some other scheme must be worked. But is this business legal? Shall a man undertake such for the benefit of a family he seeks to enter? That is a question my mind has been revolving for the past three days."

It must be admitted that this made Brigitte pause; Théodose put forth the last resource:

"Take to-night for reflection; to-morrow we will talk it over."

"Listen, my boy," said Brigitte, looking almost lovingly

at the lawyer; "the first thing is to see the house. Where is it?"

"Near the Madeleine. In ten years that will be the heart of Paris. And, you know, land has been in request there since 1819; du Tillet the banker made his fortune there. Biroutteau, the performer, Roguin, the notary, were ruined by speculating there too wildly."

"I remember that," said Brigitte.

"The house can certainly be finished by the end of this year, and the rents will begin towards the middle of next year."

"Can we go there to-morrow?"

"Dear aunt, I am at your command."

"Mercy me! don't call me that before folk. As to this business," she went on, "one must see the house before deciding."

"It has six storeys; nine windows in front, a fine courtyard, four stores, and stands on a corner. Oh! that notary is smart. But political events may occur that will depreciate the Funds, and investments of all kinds will go down. If I were in your place, madame, I would dispose of all the property Madame Thuillier and yourself have in the public funds, and buy this estate for Thuillier, and I would reimburse the fortune of the poor pious devotee with future savings. Can government bonds go higher than they are to-day? A hundred and twenty-two! It is fabulous."

Brigitte's mouth watered; she saw how she might keep her own fortune intact, and enrich her brother by making this use of Mme. Thuillier's fortune.

"My brother is right," said she to Théodose, "you are a remarkable man, you will go far——"

"And he will outmarch me," replied Théodose, with an artlessness that captivated the old maid.

"You will be one of the family," said she.

"There will be obstacles," replied Théodose; "Madame Thuillier is simple-minded; she does not like me."

"Ah! I should like to see her meddle!" cried Brigitte. "Let us complete the business if it is practical, and leave your interests in my hands."

"Thuillier, member of the General Council, in possession of an estate which will let for at least forty thousand francs a year, wearing the cross of the Legion of Honor, author of a profound, solid political work, will be elected deputy at the next election. But between ourselves, my dear aunt, one may gives such devotion to an actual father-in-law."

"You are right."

"If I have no fortune, I shall have doubled yours; and if this affair is completed satisfactorily, I shall be on the lookout for others."

"Until I shall have seen the house," said Mademoiselle Thuillier, "I can promise nothing."

"Very well; take a carriage to-morrow, and we will go. I shall have a permit to see the premises."

"Till to-morrow, then, toward noon, when we will view the house," said Brigitte, holding out her hand for Théodose to shake; but he pressed upon it a kiss, respectful and tender.

She rang the bell lively for one of her domestics, to whom she said:

"Josephine, go at once to Madame Colleville's, and ask her to come and see me."

A quarter of an hour later Flavie entered the salon, where Brigitte was walking back and forth in great excitement.

"My dear, I want you to render me a great service concerning our dear Céleste. You know Tullia, the dancer at the Opera. At one time my brother talked me deaf about her."

"Yes, my dear, but she is no longer a dancer, she is Madame la Comtesse du Bruel. Isn't her husband a peer of France?"

"Does she still like you?"

"We never see each other."

"Well, I know that Chaffaroux, the rich contractor, is her uncle," said the old maid. "He is old and rich. Go and see your old friend, and ask her to write a few lines to her uncle, telling him that it would be a great service to her if he would give some friendly advice in a matter upon which he will be consulted by you; and we will be at his house to-mor-

row at one o'clock. But the niece must pledge her uncle to the most profound secrecy. Go, my child. Our dear daughter Céleste will be a millionaire, and she will receive from my hands, do you understand, a husband who will place her on the top-round."

"Shall I tell you the first letter of his name?"

"Say on."

"Théodose de la Peyrade! You are right. He is a man who, supported by a woman like you, may become a minister."

"It is God himself who has brought him to our house," said the old maid.

At this moment Monsieur and Madame Thuillier returned.

Five days later, in the month of April, the ordinance was issued for the nomination of a member of the Municipal Council on the 20th of the month; it was inserted in the "Moniteur" and placarded all about Paris. Brigitte was in a charming humor; she had verified the statements of Théodose; the property had been inspected by old Chaffaroux and was considered by him to be a masterpiece of workmanship. Poor Grindot, the architect who was interested with the notary in this speculation, thought he was being employed in the interests of the contractor; the uncle of Madame du Bruel thought he was acting in the interest of his niece, and he gave it as his opinion that only thirty thousand francs would be necessary to thoroughly finish the property. Thus in one week la Peyrade became Brigitte's god; she proved to him by artlessly dishonest arguments that fortune should be seized when it presented itself.

"Besides, if there is any sin in the affair," said she, as they stood in the middle of the garden, "you can confess it."

"There, my friend," said Thuillier, "what, the deuce! a man should sacrifice himself to his relations."

"I have decided to do it," said la Peyrade with emotion in his voice, "but only upon the terms that I am about to state. I have no desire, in marrying Céleste, to be taxed with greed or avarice. If you reproach me, let me at least retain the respect of the public. Give to Céleste, my good old Thuillier, only

reversionary interest in the house that I am going to procure for you."

"That is just."

"Do not rob yourself," said Théodose, "and let my dear aunt also agree to the contract. Put all the rest of the available capital in the funds in the name of Madame Thuillier, to dispose of as she will. We will all live together, and I will endeavor to make my own way as soon as I am at ease with regard to the future."

"That suits me!" cried Thuillier. "Those are the words of an honest man."

"Let me kiss your forehead, my child," cried the old maid. "A dowry is always necessary, however, and we give sixty thousand francs to Céleste."

"For pin money," said la Peyrade.

"We are all three honorable people," said Thuillier. "You will secure the house for us; we will write my political book together; and you will exert yourself to obtain the cross of the Legion for me."

"That will come, as you will be municipal councillor the first of May. Only, my dear friend, and you, too, little aunt, observe the most profound secrecy, and give no heed to the calumnies which will assail me when all those whom I am going to deceive turn against me. I shall be a good-for-nothing, a rogue, a dangerous man, a Jesuit, an ambitious fellow, a fortune-hunter. Can you listen to these accusations calmly?"

"Be easy," said Brigitte.

From that day forward Thuillier was "my good friend." "My friend was the name given him by Théodose, with a variety of inflections of voice which astonished Flavie. My "little aunt," a name which vastly flattered Brigitte, was only used by him in the privacy of the family circle, or whispered in public, or occasionally in the presence of Flavie. The activity of the Thuillier workers was extreme. Great and small put their hands to the plough. Cadenet secured thirty votes

in his section. He wrote the names of seven electors, who could only sign by a cross. On April 30th, Thuillier wa elected member of the Council-general of the department of the Seine by an immense majority, for there were only sixty votes against him. On May 1st he went to the Tuileries with the municipal body to congratulate the King on his fête day He returned radiant. He had trod the path of Minard.

Ten days later a yellow placard announced the sale of the house after due publication; the reserve price being seventy-five thousand francs; the final adjudication to be made on July 1st. On this matter Claparon and Cérizet had a verbal understanding by which the latter pledged fifteen thousand francs to Claparon, if he kept the notary deceived until the expiration of the time needed to withdraw the property. Mademoiselle Thuillier, informed by Théodose, fully agreed to this secret clause, understanding that it was necessary to pay the abettors of this agreeable treachery. The money was to pass through the hands of the worthy advocate. Claparon had an interview at midnight, in the Place de l'Observatoire, with his accomplice, the notary, whose business, although ordered to be sold by a decision of the chamber of discipline of the Paris notaries, was still in the market.

This young man, the successor of Léopold Hannequin, had wished to fly to fortune instead of lagging on the way. He saw still better prospects ahead, and determined to reach his aims. In this interview he had gone so far as to offer ten thousand francs to purchase security in this corrupt affair, to be paid to Claparon only on receipt of a counter-deed from the nominal purchaser of the property. He felt sure of his man, for he knew that Claparon needed this amount to extricate himself from his liabilities.

"Who in all Paris would pay me such a commission for such a piece of work?" said Claparon to him with a semblance of frankness. "Lose no sleep over the matter. I shall secure as the apparent purchaser, one of those honorable men too stupid to have ideas of your stamp. He is an old retired official. Give him the money to pay, and he will sign your documents."

When the notary had convinced Claparon that he could get fifteen thousand francs from him, Cérizet offered his associate twelve thousand francs, and at once demanded n thousand from la Peyrade, intending to put the nce in his own pocket. All these scenes between the four were seasoned with pretty words about sentiment and ty, on the honor that men owed to each other in business tions. While these underhand transactions were being d out for the benefit of Thuillier, to whom Théodose re- l them, manifesting at the same time the deepest disgust at g obliged to dabble in such trickery, the two friends were ged on the great work that the councillor was to publish. odose became absolutely necessary to him; he was each more convinced that his marriage to Céleste was a ne- ty. Now Théodose made an admirable "friend of the ly"; he disarmed jealousy by his manner of effacing him- ; he was more like a new piece of furniture than anything ; this allayed all the suspicion of the Minards and Phel- ns, who fondly thought he had been found too light in the nce by both Brigitte and Thuillier.

"He thinks that perhaps my sister may put him in her will," l Thuillier to Minard, one day; "he doesn't know her, ugh."

This speech, prompted by Théodose, calmed Minard's dis- st.

"He is devoted to us," said the old maid one day to Phel- on; "but he ought to be grateful to us, for we give him his t, and almost support him."

This remark of the old maid, also suggested by Théodose, ed from ear to ear among the families who frequented e Thuillier home, and dissipated all their fears; and Théo- confirmed the words let fall by the Thuilliers, by a flatter- g servility. At whist he justified the blunders of his "good nd." His smile, fixed, and placid as that of Madame huillier, was always ready for the coarse jokes of the brother d sister.

This gave him what he wanted more than all, the contempt

of his antagonists. For four months in succession his face maintained the torpid expression of a snake which has swallowed and is digesting its prey.

Then he would go to the garden with Colleville or Flavie, lay aside his mask, laugh, and return to his natural state by giving way to nervous bursts of passion for his future mother-in-law, which sometimes frightened her, and sometimes awoke tender emotions.

"And you," said he to Flavie, the evening before the purchase of the house, "don't you pity me? A man like me, creeping like a cat, having to choke down every retort, chewing my gall, submitting to your rebuffs."

"My friend, my child," said Flavie, who still remained undecided about him.

These words may serve as a thermometer to indicate the temperature with which this acute artist carried on his intrigue with Flavie. The poor woman wavered between her heart and morality,—between religion and devouring passion.

In the meantime Félix Phellion devoted himself to the instruction of the young Colleville with a zeal worthy of all praise. He spent hours upon him, believing he was working for the interests of his future relatives. In recognition of his labors, and by the advice of Théodose, the professor was invited to dine with the Collevilles on Thursdays, and the advocate never failed to be present. Flavie sometimes made a purse, or a pair of slippers, or a cigar-case for the happy young man, who exclaimed:

"I am too well rewarded, madame, by the happiness I experience in being of service to you."

"We are not wealthy, monsieur," replied Colleville, "but, confound it! we are not ingrates."

Old Phellion rubbed his hands with delight in listening to his son on his return from these dinners. He already saw his dear, his noble Félix the husband of Céleste.

Nevertheless, the more Céleste loved Félix, the more reserved and serious she became in her demeanor towards him, especially since her mother had sharply lectured her one evening.

"Do not encourage young Phellion, my daughter," said [illegible] "Neither your father nor I can [illegible]ide whom you shall marry. You have expectations to fulfil. [illegible]t is a small matter [illegible] gratify a poor professor compared with that of retaining [illegible] affection of Mademoiselle Brigitte and your godmother. [illegible] you do not wish to kill your mother, my darling—yes, [illegible] me—obey me blindly in this matter, and rest assured that [illegible] desire your happiness above all else."

As stated, the final sale was fixed for the end of July. Théo-[illegible] therefore, advised Mlle. Thuillier to be prepared with [illegible] necessary cash; accordingly, she sold out her own and her [illegible]ster-in-law's Funds. The catastrophe of the treaty of the four powers, an insult to France, but now a matter of history, [illegible] necessary to be retold that the reader may thus understand that Funds declined from July to the end of August; this was caused by the prospect of war, a fear which M. Thiers did too much to promote; they fell twenty francs, and Three-per-[illegible]nts went down to sixty. This also had an evil influence on real estate in Paris, which rapidly declined. All this caused Théodose to be regarded as a prophet, a man of genius in the [illegible]s of Brigitte and Thuillier, to whom the house was defi-[illegible]tely assigned at the price of seventy-five thousand francs. The notary involved in this political disaster, lost his office [illegible]nd business, and was obliged to go into the country for some time, but he took with him Claparon's ten thousand francs. Acting upon the advice of Théodose, Thuillier made a con-[illegible]ct with Grindot, who thought he was working for the notary [illegible] finishing the house, and as during this period of financial [illegible]uble, the cessation of building left many idle workmen, [illegible] architect, who had an especial liking for the house, was [illegible]bled to finish it in a fine style at a low price.

He decorated four drawing-rooms for twenty-five thousand [illegible]rancs. Théodose required the contract to be put in writing, [illegible]d that fifty thousand should be inserted instead of twenty-[illegible] This acquisition increased Thuillier's importance ten-[illegible]d. As to the notary, he lost his head in presence of the [illegible]litical events which had fallen like a thunderbolt from a

clear sky. Sure of his control over Thuillier by reason of his services, and the transactions which they had had in common, but admired by Brigitte on account of his discretion, for he had never made the least allusion to his own poverty, and never spoke of money,—Théodose assumed a less servile air than formerly. Brigitte and Thuillier said to him:

"Nothing can take from you our esteem; in this house you are in your own home; the opinion of Minard and Phellion, which you seem to fear, is not of more value to us than a line by Victor Hugo. Let them talk; hold your head up!"

"We need them still to secure Thuillier's nomination for the Chamber," said Théodose. "Follow my advice. You have found it valuable, have you not? When the house is safe in your possession, you will have acquired it for nothing; for you can buy Three per cents for sixty francs in Madame Thuillier's name, and thus reimburse her whole fortune. Only wait till the expiration of the time allowed for a higher offer, and be ready with the fifteen thousand francs for our rogues."

Brigitte did not delay. She used all her capital, with the exception of a hundred and twenty thousand francs, and deducting her sister's fortune, she secured an income of twelve thousand francs, in Madame Thuillier's name, for two hundred and forty thousand francs; and with an income of ten thousand francs in the same funds for herself, she resolved never to trouble herself more in discounting notes.

She saw her brother secure of his forty thousand francs per annum, exclusive of his pension: she had reinvested Mme. Thuillier's fortune in Three-per-cents at sixty, which brought her in twelve thousand francs. Her own balance was also thus invested and gave her an annual income of ten thousand francs; for the future she would only invest in the Funds; she had now, herself, a total income of eighteen thousand francs, besides the house in which they lived and which she valued at eight thousand.

"We are worth quite as much as the Minards," she said.

"Don't be too ready to sing victory," said Théodose; "the right of exemption does not expire for a week yet. I have attended to your affairs, but my own are in an awful mess."

"My dear boy, you have friends!" cried Brigitte; "and if you ever need twenty-five louis, you can find them here."

Théodose at this speech exchanged a smile of meaning ..h Thuillier, who hastened to take him aside, saying to him: "Excuse my poor sister; she sees the world through the ...k of a bottle. But if you want twenty-five thousand francs, I ..ld lend them to you—out of my first rents," he added.

"Thuillier, I have a rope around my neck," cried Théo- . "Ever since I have been a lawyer I have had to give ..ptances. But mum, not a word," added Théodose, fright- : himself at having let the secret of his situation escape. ... n the clutches of scoundrels, but I hope to get the better ..em."

.. telling this secret Théodose had a double purpose: first, .. t Thuillier, next to avert a terrible blow, liable at any .. be dealt him in the secret, sinister struggle, and which ..d long foreseen. This was it:

.. the midst of the deep poverty through which he had .. none but Cérizet had gone to see him in the garret .. n cold weather, he had lain in bed for lack of clothes. .. ..d but one shirt left. For three days he lived on one .. bread, carefully cut into measured pieces, and asking .. f: "What next?" Then his former protector appeared, .. pardoned out of prison. Of the projects which these two .. then formed before the woodfire, one wrapped in his .. dy's bed-quilt, the other in his infamy, it is needless .. apitulate. The following day, Cérizet, who had talked .. Dutocq, returned, bringing with him a pair of trousers, .. t, coat, hat, and boots, all purchased in the Temple; then .. ed him off to dinner. The Provençal ate at Pinson's, .. de l'Ancienne Comédie, half of a dinner costing forty- .. francs. At dessert, between two glasses of wine, Cérizet .. his friend:

"Will you sign acceptances for me for fifty thousand francs, .. ng yourself the title of barrister?"

"You couldn't raise five thousand francs on them," re- .. d Théodose.

"That doesn't concern you; you'll pay all right; this is our business, or monsieur's who has just regaled us. It is an affair in which you risk nothing, but by which you will obtain the title of barrister, a good clientage, and the hand of a girl in marriage of the age of an old dog, and who is worth not less than twenty to thirty thousand francs a year. Neither Dutocq nor myself can marry her; we must rig you up, give you the air of an honorable man, feed and lodge you, and fix you up generally. Therefore, we shall need a guaranty. I don't say this for my sake, but for monsieur, who will have the use of my name. We equip you as a pirate to capture white women. If we don't capture that dowry, well, we'll try some other little scheme. Between ourselves we needn't handle things with tongs—that's sure. We'll give you instructions later. The affair is likely to be a long one. There are schemes to be concocted. Here's the stamps."

"Waiter, a pen and the ink!" cried Théodose.

"That's your sort of man," said Dutocq.

"Sign, 'Théodose de la Peyrade,' and add: 'Barrister, Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer,' under the words: 'Accepted for ten thousand francs.' We'll date the notes and sue you, of course secretly, so as to be able to capture and imprison you. The privateer-owner must have some security when the captain and brig are at sea."

On the morrow the clerk of the judge served la Peyrade for Cérizet, secretly. He came in the evening to see the advocate, and everything was arranged without publicity. The Tribunal of Commerce has hundreds of such cases every term. The strict rules of the Association of Barristers would cause the disbarring of a member liable to be committed to Clichy. Thus Cérizet and Dutocq had taken measures to secure twenty-five thousand francs each out of Céleste's dowry. Now, when Théodose signed the notes he only saw his living assured, but when he saw the horizon growing clearer, as he rose step by step to a higher position on the social ladder, then he wished to be rid of his two associates. Now, in asking twenty-five thousand francs of Thuillier he hoped to settle his notes to Cérizet on a fifty per cent basis.

[illegible] fortunately, this infamous speculation is not an excep[illegible] [illegible]ne. It takes place in Paris, under forms too thinly [illegible]sed to be passed over by the historian who desires to [illegible] complete and accurate picture of society. Dutocq, an [illegible] [illegible]ertine, still owed fifteen thousand francs on his [illegible] and clientage; and in the hope of success, he hoped also, [illegible] equal terms, to "stretch the rope" [illegible] of the year [illegible]

[illegible] to the present [illegible] [illegible] men had kicked or [illegible]ed. Each knew his own strength and recognized his [illegible] Equals in distrust, in watchfulness, and in apparent [illegible]ence; equals also in stolid silence and gloomy looks [illegible] mutual suspicion arose to the surface, betrayed by the [illegible] features or words. For two months past Théo[illegible] had gradually acquired the strength of a detached for[illegible] But Dutocq and Cérizet had under their skiff a mass [illegible]wder, the torch already alight; but the wind might blow [illegible] the match or the devil flood the mine.

The moment when wild beasts are about to seize their prey [illegible]ays the most critical; and this time had arrived for these [illegible]famished tigers. Cérizet said sometimes to Théodose, [illegible] that revolutionary look that sovereigns have twice known [illegible] age:

"I have made you king, and I myself am nobody. Not to be [illegible] to be nothing."

[illegible] action of envy was gathering like an avalanche in [illegible] Dutocq saw himself at the mercy of his copyist, [illegible] become enriched. Théodose would have liked to [illegible] partners, if only he could be assured that their papers [illegible] be consumed with them. All three took too much pains [illegible] their own thoughts not to suspect those of the others. [illegible]dose lived three lives in hell as he thought of how the [illegible] might turn, then of his own game, and then of the [illegible]. His speech to Thuillier was the cry of despair: he [illegible] thrown his sounding-lead into the waters of the old bour[illegible] and had found there no more than twenty-five thousand [illegible].

"And," said he to himself, "perhaps nothing, one month hence."

He now hated the Thuilliers with a profound hatred. But he held Thuillier by a harpoon that had stuck into the depth of the man's vanity—that of the projected work, "Taxation and Redemption"; he intended rearranging the ideas of "The Globe" in its Saint-Simonism, and coloring them with his fervid Southern diction.

The ignorance of Thuillier on the subject served Théodose's purpose effectively. On this slender support he took his stand, resolved to fight even on such a slender basis,—the vanity of a fool, which, according to the character, may be of granite or sand. On reflection he was glad he had spoken.

"When he sees me securing his fortune by paying fifteen thousand francs at the very moment when I have so much need of money, he will consider me a marvel of honesty."

The evening [illegible] fore the right of redemption of equity ex[illegible]red Claparon [illegible] Cérizet proceeded thus: Cérizet, to whom [illegible] other ha[illegible] [illegible] password and the address of the notary's retre[illegible], w[illegible] out to him, and said:

"One of my fri[illegible]s, Claparon, whom you know, has asked me to call up [illegible] expects you to-morrow evening, you know where; [illegible] paper you expect from him; he will exchange it w[illegible] [illegible]r the ten thousand francs, but I must be present, f[illegible] [illegible] amount five thousand belongs to me; I giv[illegible] [illegible] that a blank remains for the name [illegible]

"I [illegible] notary.

The p[illegible] [illegible] hole night with what agony one may [illegible] fo[illegible] [illegible]r inevitable ruin were in the balance. [illegible] at [illegible] [illegible]d of Claparon, he saw an officer of the Tr[illegible]nal [illegible]erce, who produced a judgment against him in du[illegible] for [illegible]equiring him to accompany him to Clichy.

Cérizet had bargained with a creditor to deliver the unlucky notary up for one-half the amount of the debt. Out of the ten thousand he had reserved for Claparon, the victim of

treachery, to preserve his liberty, was obliged to pay six sand at once. It was the amount of his debt.

receiving his portion of this extortion, Cérizet said to f, "Here are a thousand crowns to get rid of Claparon."

et then went to the notary and said:

aparon is a scoundrel, monsieur; he received five thou- francs from the alleged purchaser of your house, which him the owner. Threaten him with disclosing his to his creditors and to have him adjudged a fraudu- nkrupt, then he'll turn over half of it to you."

his rage the notary wrote Claparon an abusive letter; despair, feared arrest, and Cérizet promised to obtain port for him.

have played me many a trick, Claparon," said Céri- "but listen to me, then you can judge me. All I possess thousand crowns—I'll give you that. Go to America, trade and make your fortune there, the same as I am to make mine here."

at very evening Claparon, cleverly disguised by Cérizet, the diligence for Havre. Thus Cérizet remained r of the fifteen thousand francs demanded by Claparon, waited Théodose with tranquillity. This man, whose gence was truly remarkable, had, under the name of a tor of two thousand francs, a bidder, who was to make an but not in time to prevent the sale. This was an idea of q's, which Cérizet hastened to carry out. Fifteen thou- francs more were demanded to bribe this new rival; con- ntly he must receive seven thousand francs more, a sum had been necessary to settle an affair precisely like that illier's, who was dismayed by this misfortune. The r referred to by Claparon was a house on the Rue -Marie, which was to be sold for sixty thousand francs. e Poiret, a widow, offered him ten thousand francs, -merchant the same sum, and notes for ten thousand. thirty thousand francs, and that which he was going e, added to the six thousand francs which he already d, would enable him to tempt fortune all the more,

as the twenty-five thousand due from Théodose appeared to him certain.

"The limit of the equity is passed," said Théodose to himself, going to find Dutocq to get him to bring Cérizet to his office. "If I could only get rid of these leeches!"

"You won't be able to settle this transaction anywhere but in Cérizet's place, since Claparon is in it," replied Dutocq.

Théodose went between seven and eight o'clock to this banker of the poor, whom the clerk had notified. La Peyrade was received by Cérizet in the hideous kitchen, where misery was hacked to pieces, and where the misfortunes which we have alluded to were planned. They promenaded the miserable kitchen like two beasts in a cage, while the following conversation ensued:

"Have you brought the fifteen thousand francs?"

"No, but I have them home."

"Why, then, not in your pocket?"

"I'll explain why," replied the advocate, who, between the Rue Saint-Dominique and the Estrapade, had laid out his course of action.

The Provençal, writhing on the gridiron to which his partners had bound him, had a bright idea which flashed up from the bosom of the hot coals. Peril at times has gleams of light.

He relied upon the effect of frankness, which affects every one, even a rogue. An adversary who strips himself to the waist in a duel always excites a good feeling.

"Good!" said Cérizet, "now the farce begins."

This was a sinister word and seemed to be forced through the nose with horrible accent.

"You have placed me in a most splendid position, and I shall never forget it, my friend," said Théodose, with emotion.

"Ah! that's it, eh!" said Cérizet.

"Listen to me; you don't doubt my intentions."

"So? truly!" replied the money-lender.

"No."

"You don't intend to put up those fifteen thousand francs."

Théodose looked fixedly at Cérizet and shrugged his shoulders. These two things caused the latter to keep silence.

"Would you, in my position, knowing yourself within range of a cannon loaded with grape-shot, live thus without making an effort to end it? Listen to me. You are in a dangerous trade; some time you will be glad of good, solid protection in the courts of Paris. I, if I continue in my present course, shall become deputy attorney-general, maybe attorney-general, in three years' time. To-day I offer you a solid friendship which will be of service to you. Here are my conditions."

"Conditions?" cried Cérizet.

"In ten minutes I will bring you twenty-five thousand francs for all the claims you hold against me."

"And Dutocq? And Claparon?" exclaimed Cérizet.

"Leave them in the lurch," said Théodose, in his friend's ear.

"That is fine!" replied Cérizet. "And you have just invented this little game, finding yourself in possession of fifteen thousand francs that don't belong to you."

"But I add ten thousand to them. See here, you and I know each other."

"If you have power enough to get ten thousand francs out of your bourgeois," said Cérizet, eagerly, "you can quite as easily ask fifteen. For thirty, I'm your man. Frankness for frankness."

"You ask the impossible," exclaimed Théodose. "At this moment, if you had Claparon to deal with, your fifteen thousand francs would be lost, for the house is Thuillier's now."

"I'll see what Claparon has to say," replied Cérizet, preparing to go and consult Claparon, mounting upstairs to the chamber whence he had just gone, bag and baggage, in a flash.

The two adversaries had spoken in a tone not to be overheard; and if Théodose raised his voice, Cérizet, by a gesture, made him to understand that Claparon might be listening to them.

The five minutes during which Théodose heard what he believed to be the murmur of two voices was positive torture

to him, for his whole life was the stake. Cérizet came down, a smile upon his lips, his eyes brilliant with an infernal malice, dancing with glee, a veritable Lucifer in his gayety.

"I know nothing," said he, shrugging his shoulders; "but Claparon knows it all. He used to work for some top-notch bankers. When I told him what you wanted he laughed and said: 'I don't doubt it.' To-morrow you will have to bring me those twenty-five thousand francs you offered me; and no less besides to redeem your acceptances, my boy."

"And why?" asked Théodose, who felt as if his backbone were liquefying; as though melted by the discharge of some interior electric shock.

"The house is ours."

"And how?"

"Claparon has formally bid it in under the name of a dealer, the first one to take proceedings against him, a little toad named Sauvaignou. Desroches, the attorney, has the matter in hand, and to-morrow morning you'll receive due notification. This business will compel me, Claparon, and Dutocq to raise the wind. What would become of me without Claparon? So, I must forgive him. I forgive him; you may not believe it, my dear friend, but we actually embraced each other. Change your terms."

The last words were appalling, especially in the comment offered by the face of Cérizet, who was amusing himself by playing a scene from "Légataire," in the midst of which he studied attentively the Provençal's character.

"Oh! Cérizet," said Théodose, "and I wished you so well!"

"See you, my dear," replied Cérizet, "between us this is needed," and he struck his heart, "of which you haven't the least bit. When you imagined you had us—then came the squeeze. I saved you from vermin and the horrors of starvation. You would have died like an idiot. We put you on the way to fortune, we put you inside the finest social circles, we put you where there was something to get—and after all that! Well, now I know you; we go armed."

"Then it is war," said Théodose.

"You fired first," said Cérizet.

"But if you destroy me—then farewell to all your hopes; [illegible] you are not able to destroy me, you have an enemy [illegible]

"Exactly what I said to Dutocq yesterday," answered Cérizet, [illegible]lly. "But how can it be helped? We chose between [illegible] circumstances govern cases. I'm a pretty good [illegible]," he went on after a pause; "to-morrow bring me your [illegible] five thousand francs and Thuillier shall retain the [illegible] We'll help you at both ends, but you must pay—— [illegible] after what has passed that's not so much amiss, eh?"

And Cérizet slapped Théodose on the shoulder with a [illegible]sm more withering than the iron of the executioner had [illegible]

"Say to-morrow at noon," said the Provençal, "for there [illegible] a number of irons to heat."

"I'll do my best with Claparon, but he's a pretty tough [illegible] when he's in a hurry."

"Oh, well! to-morrow then," said Théodose, in the tone [illegible] man decided on his course.

"Good-morning, friend," said Cérizet in such a horrible [illegible] tone that it degraded the most beautiful word in the [illegible]age. "There goes a sucked orange," said he to himself, [illegible]ng after Théodose passing down the street like a man in a [illegible]

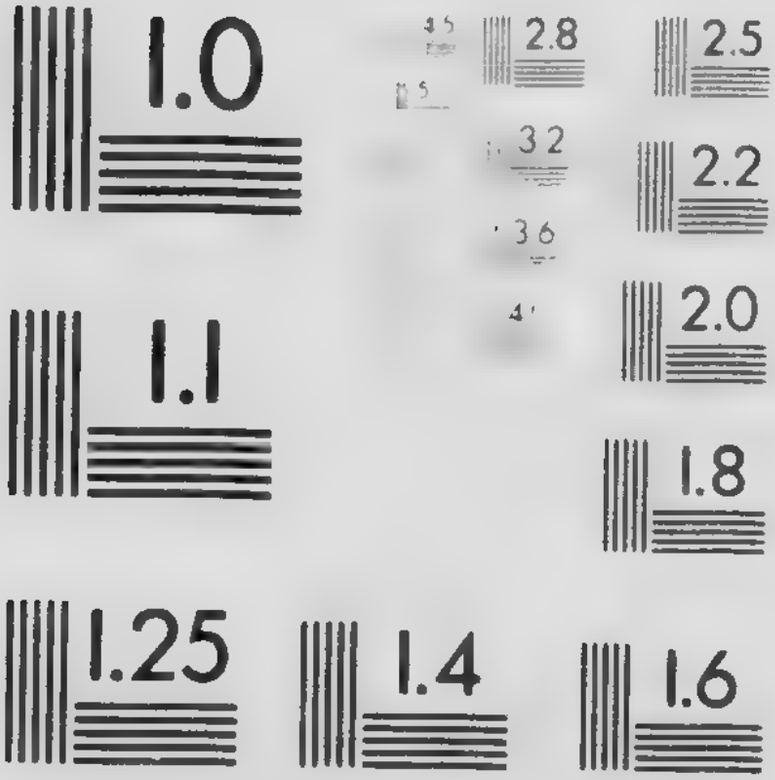
When Théodose found himself in the Rue des Postes, he [illegible] rapidly towards the house of Madame Colleville, [illegible]g himself into a rage. Inflamed by the heat of his [illegible]ons, and by that species of internal fire so familiar to [illegible] Parisians—for these dreadful situations abound in [illegible]—he reached a height of frenzy and eloquence which a [illegible] word will explain. Turning from the Rue de Saint-[illegible]es du Haut-Pas into the little Rue des Deux-Églises, he [illegible] out:

"I will kill him!"

"There is a man out of sorts," said a workman, who quieted, this jocose remark, the incandescent madness to which [illegible]dose was giving way.

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2



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On leaving Cérizet the idea came to him to go to Flavie and tell her everything. Southern natures are thus—strong up to a certain point of passion, then a collapse. He entered. Flavie was alone in her chamber; she saw Théodose and thought he had come to violate or kill her.

"What is the matter?" she cried.

"I—I—— Do you love me, Flavie?" said he.

"Oh! can you doubt it?"

"But absolutely love me—even if I were a criminal?"

"Has he then killed somebody?" said she to herself; answering him with a nod of assent.

Théodose, happy at even grasping this branch of willow, went from his chair to Flavie's lounge, burst into a passion of sobs, torrents of tears ran down his cheeks, that would have affected even an old judge. Flavie went out and said to her maid: "I am not at home to anyone;" then she closed all the doors and returned to Théodose.

She found the child of Provence stretched out, his head thrown back, and weeping. He was using his handkerchief, which, when Flavie sought to withdraw it from him, she found soaked with tears.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked.

Nature, stronger than art, served the purpose of Théodose admirably. He was no longer playing a part—he was himself: these tears, this nervous crisis, were the signature of his previous acts of comedy.

"You are a child," said she in a gentle voice, smoothing the hair of Théodose, in whose eyes the tears were drying.

"I have but you in the world," cried he, seizing Flavie's hands and kissing them with a sort of fury. "If you only remain true to me—as the body is to the soul—then," he added, recovering himself with infinite grace, "I should have the courage."

He rose and paced the room.

"Yes, I can struggle; I will recover my strength, like Antæus embracing his mother earth; with my own hands will I strangle the serpents that entwine me, that give me serpent-

kisses, that slaver my cheeks, that suck my blood, my honor. Oh! that poverty! How great are those who can stand erect under it, with a bold front. Far better for me to have starved in my garret three years and a half ago. A coffin is a soft bed in comparison with my present life. For eighteen months I have been *fed on bourgeois;* and when all is propitious for attaining an honest, fortunate life and a great future, when I was about seating myself at the banquet of society, the executioner taps me on the shoulder: 'Pay thy tithes to the devil, or die!' And I, shall I not trample them underfoot! and I, shall I not ram my arm down their throats to their very entrails! Ah! yes, I will, I will. See you, Flavie, my eyes are dry. And presently I shall laugh; I feel my power. Oh! say to me that you love me—say it once again. At this moment it sounds like the word 'Pardoned' to the condemned!"

"You are terrible, my friend," said Flavie. "Oh! you bruise me."

She knew nothing of the meaning of this, but she fell on the couch half-dead, so agitated was she by this scene; and then Théodose flung himself on his knees before her.

"Pardon me! forgive me," he said.

"But what does it all mean?" she asked.

"They wish to ruin me. Oh! promise me Céleste; you shall see in what a glorious life I will make you a sharer. If you hesitate—well, that will mean you shall be mine; I will have you!"

He started up with such vehemence that Flavie, terrified, rose and walked away.

"Oh! my angel! at your feet, there—what a miracle! For certainly God is for me. I have received an illumination. I have had a sudden idea. Oh, thanks, my guardian angel, holy Théodose, thou hast saved me."

Flavie admired this chameleon being; on his knees, his hands crossed over his breast, his eyes raised towards heaven in religious ecstasy, he recited a prayer, he was the most fervent of Catholics, he crossed himself. It was as fine as the communion of Saint-Jérôme.

"Adieu," he said, in a melancholy but seductive voice.

"Oh!" cried Flavie, "leave me this handkerchief."

Théodose descended the stairs like a madman, leaped into the street, and ran towards Thuillier's house. Then he looked back, saw Flavie at the window, and waved his hand in triumph.

"What a man!" said she.

"My good friend," said Théodose, in a gentle, calm voice, almost coaxing, to Thuillier, after reaching home, "we have fallen into the hands of atrocious scoundrels; but I intend giving them a little lesson."

"What is wrong?" said Brigitte.

"Well, they want twenty-five thousand francs, and so, to get the better of us, have arranged to bid in the property. Put five thousand francs in your pocket, Thuillier, and come with me; I'll assure you that house. I am making implacable enemies for myself," he exclaimed; "they seek to destroy me morally. Should you despise their calumnies and feel no change toward me, I shall be content. And what is this, after all? If I succeed, you will have paid for the house one hundred and twenty-five thousand francs instead of paying one hundred and twenty."

"Will this thing go on?" demanded Brigitte, uneasily, whose eyes dilated with a horrible suspicion.

"None but preferred creditors have the right of redemption, and as in this case there is but one that has used this right, we can take it quietly. His debt is but two thousand francs; but of course there are the costs of the lawyers in affairs like this which must be paid, and it wouldn't be amiss to give a perquisite of a thousand francs to the creditor."

"Go, Thuillier," said Brigitte; "take your hat and gloves, and get the cash—you know where."

"As I let that fifteen thousand francs go without result, I don't wish any more money to pass through my hands. Thuillier can pay it himself," said Théodose, when he found himself alone with Brigitte. "You have made twenty thousand francs by the bargain I made with Grindot; he thought he

was assisting the notary, and you own a property which in five years will be worth nearly a million. It is at a corner of the boulevard."

Brigitte was uneasy, and listened exactly like a cat that smells mice under the floor. She looked very earnestly, and half doubtfully, at Théodose.

"What is it, little aunt?"

"Oh! I shall be in deadly fear until we are the real owners," she replied.

"Where are we going?" asked Thuillier.

"To Maître Godeschal, whom we must employ as our attorney."

"But we refused Céleste to him," exclaimed the old maid.

"The more reason for employing him," said Théodose. "I have studied him. He is an honorable man, and he will be delighted to render you a service."

Godeschal, Derville's successor, had been for more than ten years Desroches' head-clerk. Théodose, to whom this fact was known, had had this name flashed upon his consciousness by an internal voice in the midst of his despair; and he foresaw the possibility of wrenching from the hands of Claparon the weapon with which Cérizet threatened him. But above all, the advocate desired to get into Desroches' office, and ascertain the position of his adversaries. Godeschal alone, by reason of the intimacy between the master and the clerk, could be of assistance to him.

The lawyers of Paris, when they are so closely allied as were Godeschal and Desroches, live in a true comradeship, resulting in a certain facility of arranging affairs susceptible of arrangement. They obtain from each other, in turn, all possible concessions, applying the old proverb, "Pass me the rhubarb, and I will pass you the senna" ("One good turn deserves another"), which is practised in all the professions, among painters, soldiers, judges, merchants,—wherever hostility has not raised too strong barriers between the parties.

"I am getting very well paid for this transaction," is a reason which requires no expression,—it is in the gesture, the

accent, the look; and as lawyers are a class who meet on this common ground, the business is soon settled. The counterpoise to this comradeship exists in what may be termed professional honor. Thus, society should believe a physician who in testifying on a question of legal medicine, says, "This body contains arsenic." No consideration can overcome the self-respect of the actor, the integrity of the judge, the independence of the public minister. And a Paris attorney says, with good-natured frankness, "You can not obtain that; my client is enraged." To which the other replies, "Well, we shall see."

Now la Peyrade, a smart man, had not trailed his robe about the Palace so long without being aware how best these judicial amenities would serve his ends.

"Remain in the carriage," he said to Thuillier, on reaching the Rue Vivienne, where Godeschal was now master in the place where he had begun his first labors.

It was eleven o'clock at night, but la Peyrade was not wrong in thinking that a newly fledged attorney would be found in his office, even late as it was.

"To what do I owe this visit, Monsieur l'Avocat?" said Godeschal, meeting la Peyrade.

Foreigners, provincials, men of the world, perhaps, are not aware that barristers (*avocats*) are to attorneys what generals are to marshals; a strict line of demarkation divides them. However venerable may be the attorney, however competent, he must go to the barrister. The attorney is the one who lays out the campaign, who collects the munitions of war, and sets everything on the move; the barrister gives battle. It is not explained why the law gives the client two men instead of one, any more than it is known why the author needs both a printer and publisher. The Association of Barristers forbids its members to perform any act pertaining to that of the attorney. It very rarely happens that a barrister sets foot in an attorney's office, they meet in the Palace of Justice; but, in society, these barriers are thrown down, and sometimes barristers, in a position similar to that of la Peyrade, demean

themselves by calling upon an attorney; but such occurrences are rare, and special urgency is urged as an excuse.

"Eh, *mon Dieu,*" said la Peyrade, "it is a grave affair, and between us we must settle a very delicate piece of business. Thuillier is below in a carriage, and I come, not in my capacity as a barrister, but as a friend of Thuillier's. You are in a position in which you can be of immense service to him, and I told him that you were of too noble a soul (for you are a worthy successor of the great Derville) not to place at his direction your utmost capacity. This is the business."

After explaining wholly to his own advantage the trick which must, he said, be balked by ability,—and lawyers meet more clients that lie than those who speak the truth,—the barrister developed his plan of campaign.

"You ought, my dear maître, to go this very night to see Desroches, explain the whole plot, persuade him to send for this client of his to-morrow, this Sauvaignou; between us three we will properly confess him; if he wants a perquisite of say a thousand francs we'll stand that, in addition to five hundred each for yourself and Desroches, only provided that Thuillier obtains from Sauvaignou a letter renouncing his bid before ten o'clock to-morrow. This Sauvaignou, what does he want? His money! Well, then, such a peddler as that wouldn't resist the appeal of a thousand-franc bill, so especially if he is but the agent of a cupidity backing him. The fight between him and the others is no matter of concern to us. Come, do your best to get the Thuillier family out of this."

"I'll go at once and see Desroches," said Godeschal.

"No; not before Thuillier gives you a power of attorney and five thousand francs. Money is necessary in such a case as this."

After an interview at which Thuillier was present, la Peyrade took Godeschal in the carriage to Desroches', in the Rue de Béthisy, saying that they would return by the Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer; and on the doorstep of Desroches' made an appointment for the next day at seven o'clock.

La Peyrade's whole future and fortune lay in the outcome; for he had arranged to meet Godeschal at Desroches' office on the morrow at seven o'clock. It is not astonishing, therefore, that he disregarded the traditions of the bar and went thither to study Sauvaignou and to take part in the struggle in spite of the danger he ran in coming under the eyes of one of the most formidable advocates of Paris.

As he entered and made his salutations he observed Sauvaignou. He was, as his name indicated, from Marseilles, and was foreman to a master-carpenter, or rather a kind of clerk of the works, standing between the master-carpenter and the workmen. The profit of the work consisted in what he could make out of the price paid him by the contractor and the labor he employed; he received no profit out of the materials used. The master-carpenter had failed. Sauvaignou at once appealed to the Tribunal of Commerce and had a lien placed on the property. This small affair was the end of the collapse. Sauvaignou was a little, squat man, who wore a gray linen blouse, cap on head, and sat in an armchair in the office. Three bills of a thousand francs each lying before him, on Desroches' desk, showed la Peyrade that the engagement was over, and the attorneys worsted. Godeschal's eyes told the rest, and the glance which Desroches, the most feared of every attorney in Paris, cast on the "poor man's advocate" was like the blow of a pick in a grave. Stimulated by danger the Provençal was magnificent; he laid his hand on the three bills of one thousand each, and folded them as if about to put them into his pocket.

"Thuillier won't make the deal," said he to Desroches.

"Well, then, we are all agreed," replied the terrible attorney.

"Yes; your client must now hand over to us fifty thousand francs expended by us in furnishing the property, under the contract between Thuillier and Grindot. I did not inform you of that yesterday," said he, turning to Godeschal.

"You hear that?" said Desroches to Sauvaignou. "I shall not touch this case without being guaranteed."

"But, gentlemen," said the tradesman, "I cannot deal

with this matter until I have seen the worthy man who gave me five hundred francs on account for having signed a power of attorney to him."

"Are you from Marseilles?" said la Peyrade to him, in Sauvaignou's own *patois*.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Well, poor devil, you, don't you see they wish to ruin you? Don't you know what to do? Pocket those three thousand francs, and when the other fellow turns up, take out your rule and give him a pounding; tell him that he is a scoundrel, that he wants you to do his dirty work, that instead of doing this you revoke your power of attorney, and that, further, you will return him the five hundred francs the first week in which there are three Thursdays. Then be off to Marseilles with that three thousand five hundred francs and your savings. If anything goes wrong, let me know through these gentlemen; I'll get you out of the scrape, for not only am I a good Provençal, but also one of the leading barristers in Paris and the friend of the poor."

When the workman found in a compatriot an authority for questioning the reasons he had for betraying the money-lender he capitulated, demanding thirty-five hundred francs.

Fifteen hundred francs being delivered to him he said:

"A good stroke! but it is worth it, for he might put me in prison."

"Strike him only when he attacks you," said la Peyrade. "Then you will be acting in self-defence."

When Desroches had convinced him that la Peyrade was a surprising attorney, Sauvaignou signed a release of his claim, including principal and interest, to be ratified by Thuillier himself, in the presence of their respective advocates, so that the matter might be settled beyond doubt.

"We leave you the fifteen hundred francs," la Peyrade whispered to Desroches and Godeschal, "on condition of giving me the renunciation. I will have Thuillier sign it in the office of his notary, Cardot. The poor man did not close his eyes all night."

"Very well," said Desroches. "You may congratulate yourself," he added to Sauvaignou, as the latter signed his name, "at having made fifteen hundred francs so easily."

"Do they really belong to me, Monsieur Notary?" asked the Provençal, already ill at ease.

"Oh! lawfully enough," replied Desroches. "Only you must revoke the power of attorney given yesterday to your proxy. Go into the office—this way."

Desroches instructed his head clerk what to do, and told one of his students to see that a messenger went to Cérizet's before ten o'clock.

"Thank you, Desroches," said la Peyrade, pressing the hand of the advocate. "You think of everything. I shall not forget this service."

"Do not leave your documents at Cardot's till afternoon."

"See here, countryman," said the advocate in Provençal to Sauvaignou, "take your 'Dolly' to Belleville for the day, and be sure not to go home."

"I understand," said Sauvaignou.

"Your hand, until to-morrow!"

"All right!" said la Peyrade, uttering a Provençal cry.

"There is something behind all this," said Desroches to Godeschal, just as the advocate was returning from the study to the office.

"The Thuilliers get a magnificent freehold for next to nothing, that's all," Godeschal replied.

"La Peyrade and Cérizet seem to me like two divers fighting under the sea. What am I to tell Cérizet, who placed the affair in my hands?" asked Desroches as the barrister returned.

"Say that Sauvaignou forced your hand," said la Peyrade.

"And you fear nothing!" said Desroches pointedly.

"What, I? I have only given Cérizet a lesson."

"To-morrow I shall learn the whole," said Desroches to Godeschal; "no one blabs like a beaten man."

La Peyrade went off, with the renunciation in his pocket. At eleven o'clock he was in the court of the justice of the

[illegible]; he saw Cérizet come in, pale with rage, his eyes full of venom; he said in his ear, in a calm, firm voice:

"My friend, I also am a pretty good sort of fellow myself; I will hold these twenty-five thousand francs in bank-bills at your disposal; they are yours in exchange for my acceptances."

Cérizet gazed at the advocate of the poor, but was quite unable to make any answer; he was green; his bile had struck in.

"I am now incontestably a property owner," cried Thuillier when he returned from his notary, Jacquinot, the son-in-law and successor of Cardot. "No human power can now dispossess me; so they say!"

The middle classes believe the notaries more readily than they do the attorneys. The notary is much nearer to them than any other ministerial officer. The middle-class Parisian never visits his advocate without trembling; his belligerent bearing troubles him, while he always enjoys a new pleasure in visiting his notary, whose wisdom and good sense he admires.

"Cardot, who is looking for a fine suite," said Thuillier, "has asked for one of the apartments on the second floor. If I wish he will introduce me on Sunday to a tenant who desires a lease of the property for eighteen years at a rental of forty thousand francs and taxes. What do you say to that, Brigitte?"

"Ah!" said Brigitte, "we must wait; what an awful fright our dear Théodose gave me."

"Hallo! my best friend; but what do you suppose Cardot said? He asked me who had put me in the way of this stroke, and said that I ought to give him at least ten thousand francs as a present. As a fact, I do owe all to him."

"But he is the same as our own boy," said Brigitte.

"Poor fellow, I'll do him the justice of saying that he does not ask for anything."

"Well, my good friend," said la Peyrade, who returned at [illegible] o'clock from the justice of the peace, "here you are, Mister Richman."

"And through you, my dear Théodose."

"And you, little aunt, have you come to life again? Ah! you were not so much afraid as I was. I put your interests before my own. *Tenez!* I couldn't breathe freely till eleven o'clock; still I am sure now of having two mortal enemies at my heels in the two persons whom I tricked for you. As I came home I asked myself what kind of influence you had over me that induced me to commit this sort of crime! Whether the honor of being one of your family and becoming your son will ever efface from my conscience the stain I have put upon it."

"Bah! you can confess it," said Thuillier, the freethinker.

"Now," said Théodose to Brigitte, "you may pay in security the price of the house, eighty thousand francs, and thirty thousand to Grindot, in all, with the costs you have paid, one hundred and twenty thousand francs; the last twenty thousand make it in all one hundred and forty thousand. If you lease the whole to one tenant, ask for the last year's rent in advance, and reserve for me and my wife all the floor above the entresol. You can then even get forty thousand francs a year for twelve years. Then, if at any time you wish to move nearer the Chamber and desire to quit this quarter, you can stay with me; there are stables and coach-house, and so forth, pertaining to it. Meanwhile, Thuillier, I am going to get you the Cross of the Legion of Honor."

Hearing this last promise, Brigitte cried:

"My faith! my boy, you've done our business so well that I shall leave you that of leasing the house."

"Don't abdicate, good aunt," said Théodose; "and God preserve me from taking one step without you. You are the good genius of the family. I am constantly thinking of the day when Thuillier will be in the Chamber. You will have forty thousand francs in hand inside of two months. And, besides all, that won't prevent Thuillier from handling his ten thousand in rent per quarter."

After having thrown this hope at the old maid, who was jubilant, he took Thuillier into the garden and said, without beating about the bush:

"My good friend, find some means to get me ten thousand
es from your sister; but don't let her know they are for
. tell her they are needed for the formalities of getting
Cross; that you know just who will get the cash."

That's all right," said Thuillier; "I can repay her when
my rents."

Have the money this evening, my good friend. I am
for your Cross, and to-morrow we shall know just where
and."

What a man you are!" cried Thuillier.

The ministry of the first of March will soon fall. We
get it from them," replied Théodose shrewdly.

Théodose now hurried off to Mme. Colleville, to whom he
d as he entered:

I have conquered; we shall have secured for Céleste a
perty worth a million francs, a life interest in which will
ven in her marriage-contract by Thuillier; but keep my
et, or your daughter will be in demand by the peers of
ce. This advantage, however, will only accrue to me.
dress yourself and let us call upon the Comtesse du
; she can get Thuillier the Cross. While you are getting
r arms I'll do a little courting with Céleste; you and I
talk in the carriage."

Peyrade had seen Céleste and Phellion together in the
ing-room. Flavie had such confidence in her daughter
she had left her with the young professor. After the
t good fortune of the morning Théodose felt the neces-
f beginning his addresses to Céleste. The time for em-
ing the lovers had come. He did not hesitate to listen at
drawing-room door before entering, to find out how far
had gone in love's alphabet; and he was encouraged to
oit this breach of decorum by overhearing some tones of
which suggested a quarrel. Love, according to one of
oets, is a privilege which two persons take of causing
other much unhappiness over trifles.

Having once chosen Félix for her life companion, Céleste
less desire to study Félix than to unite herself to him by

that communion of hearts which is the beginning of all true love, and which in young minds leads to unconscious examination and scrutiny of the beloved. The quarrel which Théodose overheard had its origin in a serious disagreement which had existed for some days between the mathematician and Céleste.

This child, the moral fruit of the period during which Madame Colleville was trying to repent of her sins, was firm in her piety. She belonged to the true community of the faithful. In her rigid Catholicism, tempered by the mysticism so alluring to many young souls, was mingled a vein of poetry, a life within a life. From this condition young girls eventually become excessively frivolous, or they become saints. But during this charming period of their youth, they are inclined to a touch of absolutism. They have always before their mental eyes a perfect ideal,—everything must be heavenly, angelic, or divine for them. Outside of this ideal there is nothing,—all is dust and corruption. This feeling often causes young girls to reject a flawed diamond, who as women worship paste.

Now Céleste had recognized, not the irreligion of Félix, but his indifference to matters of faith. Félix, like most geometricians, chemists, mathematicians, and great naturalists, had subjected religion to reason; he saw in it a problem as insoluble as the squaring of the circle. In *petto* a deist, he still professed the religion of the majority of the French, without attaching more importance to it than to the new laws of July. There must needs be a God in heaven, the same as there must be a bust of the King in the mayor's office. Félix Phellion, worthy son of his father, had never thrown the slightest veil over his conscience. He permitted Céleste to read it with the candor and indifference of a solver of problems; and the young girl mingled the religious question with the civil question. She professed a horror for atheism, and her confessor had told her that a deist was cousin-german to an atheist.

"Have you thought, Félix, of the promise you made me?" asked Céleste, when Mme. Colleville had left them.

"No, my dear Céleste," replied Félix.

"Oh! to break a promise," cried she, dolefully.

"It would have been profanation," said Félix. "I love you so much, and with a tenderness which makes me so weak against your requests, that I promised something against my conscience. Conscience, Céleste, is our treasure, our strength, our mainstay. How could you desire me to go to church and kneel before a priest in whom I can only see a man? You would despise me if I obeyed you."

"So, my dear Félix, you will not go to church?" said Céleste, casting a tearful look at the man she loved. "If I were your wife, you would leave me to go alone, eh? You do not love me as I love you—for until this moment I have had in my heart a feeling for an atheist against the command of God."

"An atheist!" cried Félix. "Oh! no. Listen, Céleste: I know of a certainty that there is a God; I believe that, but I have a much higher opinion of Him than your priests have; I have no desire to bring Him down to my level, I try to raise myself to Him. I hearken to the voice He has planted within me, a voice which honest men call conscience, and I try to betray that divine ray as it reaches me. I will never injure any person; I will not do aught to break the commandments of universal morality, which formed those of Confucius, Moses, Pythagoras, Socrates, as well as of Jesus Christ. I remain before God; my acts shall be my prayers; I will never lie, my word is sacred; and I will do nothing vile or evil. These are the precepts of my virtuous father, these I wish to leave to my children. I will do all the good I can, even at a sacrifice. What can you ask more than this?"

This profession of faith caused Céleste to sadly shake her head.

"Read attentively," said she, "'The Imitation of Christ.' When you are to be converted to the holy church, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman, then you will learn how absurd your words are. Listen, Félix; Marriage, says the church, is not the affair of a day, the satisfaction of desire; it is made for all eternity.

What! shall we be united by day and night, shall we be one flesh, one spirit, and yet speak two languages, have two faiths in our hearts, two religions; a cause of perpetual dissension? You would condemn me to weep unseen over the state of your soul. Could I address myself in peace to God when He always had His right arm bared against you? Your deistic blood, your convictions, might animate my children. Oh, my God! how wretched for a wife. No; such thoughts are intolerable. O Félix, be of my faith, for I cannot accept yours. Do not place a gulf between us. If you loved me, you would already have read the 'Imitation of Christ.'"

The Phellions, children of the "Constitutionnel," had no love for priests. Félix had the imprudence to reply to this voice of supplication from the depths of an ardent soul:

"You are repeating, Céleste, the lesson taught by your confessor, and nothing can be more fatal to happiness, believe me, than the interference of priests in one's household."

"Oh!" indignantly cried Céleste, who had been inspired by love alone, "you do not love me. The voice of my heart does not reach yours. You have not understood me, for you have not heard me; and I forgive you, for you do not know what you say."

She enveloped herself in lofty silence; Félix went to the window and thrummed upon the panes; a music familiar to those who have indulged in poignant reflections. The Phellion conscience argued thus:

"Céleste is a rich heiress, and, by yielding, contrary to the voice of natural religion, to her ideas, it would be done for the purpose of making an advantageous marriage: an infamous act. I ought not, as a father of a family, to allow a priest to have any influence in my home; if I submit to-day I do a weak act, which will lead to many such, pernicious to the authority of a father and husband. All this is beneath the dignity of a philosopher."

Then he returned to his beloved.

"Céleste," he said, "on my knees I beg you not to confound things which the law in its wisdom has separated. Each has

his own way of salvation; as to society, it is not obeying God to obey its laws. Christ said: 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.' Cæsar is the body politic. Forget this little quarrel, dear."

"Little quarrel!" cried the young enthusiast. "I wish for you to have my whole heart as I would have all yours; if you would divide it into two parts. Is not that awful? You forget that marriage is a sacrament."

"Your priests have turned your brain," cried the mathematician, impatiently.

"Monsieur Phellion," said Céleste, hastily interrupting him, "that's enough of this subject."

It was at this point of the controversy that Théodose deemed it judicious to make his entry. He found Céleste pale and the young professor uneasy as a lover should be who has just vexed his mistress.

"I heard the word 'enough,' has there been too much?" said he, looking by turns at Céleste and Félix.

"We were talking religion," replied Félix. "I was telling mademoiselle how evil the influence of clerics must be in a family."

"That was not the point at all, monsieur," said Céleste, sharply; "but that I wanted to know if husband and wife could be of one heart when one was an atheist and the other a Catholic."

"Is it possible that there are atheists?" exclaimed Théodose, making signs of deep amazement. "Could a Catholic possibly marry a Protestant? But it is impossible that safety can be found for a married couple unless there is perfect agreement in their religious opinions. I am, of a truth, from the Comtat, of a family which counts a pope among its ancestors; for our arms are: *gules* with a key *argent*, our supporters, a monk holding a church and a pilgrim bearing a staff, the motto being: '*J'ouvre et je ferme*' (I open and I shut). I am, I may say, fiercely dogmatic on the subject. To-day, thanks to our system of modern education, it is not the least strange that religion should be called in ques-

tion. But, as I tell myself, I would never marry a Protestant even if she possessed millions; even if I had lost my reason for love of her. Faith is beyond discussion. *Una fides, unus Dominus*—one faith, one Lord—that is my political motto."

"You hear!" cried Céleste, triumphantly looking at Félix.

"I am not too devout," la Peyrade continued. "I go to mass every morning at six o'clock, that I may not be observed; I fast on Fridays; I am, in short, a son of the church; I would not commence any important undertaking without prayer, after the ancient custom of our ancestors; but I do not obtrude my religion on people. In the Revolution of 1789 an incident occurred that bound us more firmly than ever to our holy mother, the church. A poor young lady of the elder branch of la Peyrades, who owned the little estate of la Peyrade (for we are the Peyrades of Canquoëlle, but both branches mutually inherit),—well, this young lady married, six years before the Revolution, a barrister, who after the fashion of the times was a Voltairean, that is, an unbeliever, or, if you like, a deist. He took up all the revolutionary ideas, practising the pleasing rites of which you have heard, in the worship of the goddess of Reason. He came to our part of the country imbued with the fanaticism of the Convention. His wife was very handsome; he compelled her to play the rôle of Liberty; the poor unfortunate went mad—she died insane. Ah, well, as things seem to be going, we may yet see another 1793."

This romance, forged on the spot, made such an impression on the young, fresh imagination of Céleste that she rose, courtesied low to the two young men, and retired to her chamber.

"Ah, monsieur, why did you tell her that?" exclaimed Félix, stricken to the heart by the cold look of affected indifference cast upon him by Céleste. "She already believes herself transformed into the Goddess of Reason."

"What was it all about?" asked Théodose.

"Concerning my indifference on religious matters."

"The great curse of the age," replied Théodose with a grave air.

"I am ready," said Mme. Colleville, appearing in a tasteful toilet. "But what ails my poor daughter? She is crying!"

"Crying, madame!" cried Félix. "Tell her, madame, that I will at once begin to study the 'Imitation of Christ.'"

And Félix went down stairs with Théodose and Flavie, whose arm the advocate pressed, intimating that he would explain in the carriage the excitement of the young scholar.

An hour later Mme. Colleville, Céleste, Colleville, and Théodose were entering the Thuilliers' home to dine with them. Théodose and Flavie took Thuillier into the garden, where Théodose said:

"My good friend, you will have the Cross within a week. Listen, this dear friend will tell you all about our visit to the Comtesse du Bruel."

Théodose left them, having caught sight of Desroches approaching, escorted by Brigitte; a chilling, dread presentiment bade him go to meet the attorney.

"My dear maître," whispered Desroches to Théodose, "I am here to see if you can at once furnish twenty-five thousand francs, with two thousand six hundred and eighty francs, seven centimes, in addition for costs."

"Are you Cérizet's attorney?"

"He has placed all the acceptances into Louchard's hands; you know what you must expect after arrest. Is Cérizet wrong in believing that you have twenty-five thousand francs in your desk? You offered them to him; he finds it only natural that you should not retain them."

"I am greatly obliged for the course you have taken, my dear maître," said Théodose; "I expected this attack."

"Between ourselves," replied Desroches, "you played a fine trick on him. The rascal will stop at nothing to be revenged upon you, for he will lose all if you are willing to cast off your robe, throw it to the sharks, and go to prison."

"I?" exclaimed Théodose. "I shall pay him. But even then he will still retain five acceptances of mine, each of which is for five thousand francs; what does he mean to do with them?"

"Oh! after the affair of this morning, it is impossible to guess; but my client is a crafty, mangy dog, and has, without a doubt, his little schemes."

"See, now, Desroches," said Théodose, taking the hard, lean lawyer by the waist; "have you not got the notes?"

"Will you pay them?"

"Yes; in three hours."

"Good; then be at my place at nine o'clock; I'll receive the cash and give you the acceptances; but, mind, at half-past nine they pass to Louchard."

"All right, this evening at nine o'clock," said Théodose.

"At nine," said Desroches, embracing in a comprehensive glance the whole company assembled in the garden.

Céleste with reddened eyes was talking with her godmother, Colleville, Brigitte, Flavie, and Thuillier on the steps of the broad stairway which led from the garden to the hall. Desroches said to Théodose who had conducted him there:

"You can certainly redeem your notes."

At a glance Desroches had taken in the grand schemes of the advocate.

At daybreak the following morning, Théodose went to the money-lender to see what effect his prompt payment had had upon his enemy, and to make one more effort to rid himself of his horse-fly.

He found Cérizet in colloquy with a woman; he was imperatively requested to keep at a distance and not to interrupt the interview. Théodose had a presentiment, though a vague one, that the result of this conference would in some wise affect Cérizet's arrangements as to himself, for he saw on his face the change that comes of hope.

"But, my dear Mamma Cardinal——"

"Yes, my worthy sir——"

"What do you want?"

"It must be decided——"

These beginnings and ends of sentences were the only gleams of light which the animated but whispered conversation cast on the motionless witness, whose attention was fixed on Madame Cardinal.

Mme. Cardinal was one of Cérizet's first customers; she was a fish-hawker. Parisians may know this peculiar class of creatures to their terror, but strangers do not suspect their existence; and Mother Cardinal, technically speaking, was worthy of the interest she excited in the advocate. So many of this class of women are met on the streets that the passer-by pays no more attention to them than he does to the three thousand pictures in an exhibition; but in these surroundings, the Cardinal had all the merit of an isolated masterpiece,—she was a perfect type of her species.

She was mounted on muddy *sabots*—peasants' wooden shoes but her feet, besides being well inclosed in gaiters, were further protected by good, thick woolen stockings. Her print dress, enriched with flounces of mud, bore the imprint of the strap which supported the huckster's basket, cutting across the back to below the waist. Her principal garment was a shawl of rabbit-skin cashmere, so-called, the two ends of which were knotted behind above her bustle—for only this fashionable word will properly describe the cabbage-like effect produced by the pressure of the basket upon her form. A coarse neckerchief served as a fichu, which revealed a red throat covered with wrinkles, like the surface of the ice on the Villette pond after skating. Her coiffure was a yellow bandanna twisted into the shape of a picturesque turban.

Short and stout, a skin rich in color, Mother Cardinal took her morning dram of brandy. She had once been handsome. The Market had reproached her, in its vigorous figure of speech, of having earned more than one day's wages at night. Her voice, to be brought down to the pitch of ordinary conversation, had to be stifled by her as is done in a sick-room; but then it came out thick and muffled from a throat so used to shouting the name of each fish in its season in a tone to reach the deepest recess of the highest garrets. Her nose, like Roxelane, her well-shaped mouth, her blue eyes, all that had at one time made up her beauty, was now buried in folds of vigorous fat which plainly told of an open-air life and occupation. The stomach and bust were of an amplitude worthy of Rubens' pencil.

"And do you wish to see me lying on straw?" said she to Cérizet. "What do I care for the Toupilliers? Ain't I a Toupillier myself? Where do you wish to impale the Toupilliers?"

This savage outburst was silenced by Cérizet with a prolonged "hush!" always obeyed by every conspirator.

"Well, go and see what you can do about it and then come back to me," said Cérizet, pushing her toward the door and whispering in her ear.

"Well, my dear friend," said Théodose to Cérizet, "so you have got your money?"

"Yes," answered Cérizet; "we have measured our claws, they are equally sharp, long, and strong. What follows?"

"Am I to tell Dutocq that yesterday you received twenty-five thousand francs?"

"Oh! my dear friend, not one word, if you love me," exclaimed Cérizet.

"Listen," said Théodose. "I must know once for all what it is you want. I have firmly made up my mind not to stay for another twenty-four hours on the gridiron to which you have bound me. You may cheat Dutocq all you like, I don't care about that, but I intend to know where I stand. It is a fortune that I have paid you, twenty-five thousand francs, for you must have made ten thousand by your traffic; it ought to give you a start as an honest man. Cérizet, if you let me alone, if you do not prevent me becoming the husband of Mademoiselle Colleville, I may become a sort of royal advocate in Paris. You cannot do better than to secure a friend in such a sphere."

"Here are my conditions, take them or leave them, they are not subject to discussion. You will get for me the lease of Thuillier's house for eighteen years, then I will hand you out one of the five acceptances cancelled. You won't afterward find me in your way; as to Dutocq, you'll have to settle with him for the remaining four. You beat me; Dutocq is not smart enough to buck against you."

"Agreed, if you will give forty-eight thousand francs a

year for the rent of the house, the last year in advance, and begin the tenancy in October."

"Yes, but I shall only give forty-three thousand francs in cash, your acceptance will make the balance, the forty-eight. I have had a good look at the house, I've examined it; it's just the thing I want."

"One last condition," said Théodose; "you'll lend me a hand against Dutocq?"

"No," replied Cérizet; "you have done him brown enough now, without having me to help you baste him: you can roast him dry. But be reasonable. The poor man knows not which way to turn to pay the last fifteen thousand francs due on his position; you should remember that you can get all your acceptances back for fifteen thousand francs."

"Well, give me two weeks to get the lease."

"Not one day past Monday next. On Tuesday your acceptance for five thousand francs will be in Louchard's hands, unless you pay me on Monday or get Thuillier to grant me the lease."

"Very well, let it be Tuesday!" said Théodose. "Are we friends?"

"We shall be Tuesday," replied Cérizet.

"Very well,—Tuesday. You will pay for the dinner?" said Théodose, laughing.

"At the *Rocher de Cancale*, if I have the lease. Dutocq will be there. We will have a laugh. It has been a long time since I have had a laugh."

Théodose and Cérizet shook hands, saying harmoniously, "Till we meet again."

Cérizet had good reason for being so readily pacified. In the first place, as Desroches had said, "Bile is out of place in business matters;" and the money-lender had perceived the truth of the proverb too clearly, not to coolly take advantage of his position and to "bleed" the cunning Provençal.

"You have your revenge to gratify," said Desroches to him, "and you have the fellow in a tight place. Make the most of it."

For ten years Cérizet had seen a number of people getting rich by the business of sub-letting property. The principal tenant is, in Paris, to the owner of houses what farmers are to country landowners. All Paris has seen how a famous tailor built at his own cost a sumptuous structure on the site of the celebrated Frascati, paying as principal tenant fifty thousand francs as rent for the building, which in nineteen years was to become the property of the landowner. Notwithstanding the cost of construction, about seven hundred thousand francs, those nineteen years' profits in the end proved enormous.

Cérizet, on the lookout for business, had calculated the chances for profit in renting the house which Thuillier had "stolen," as he said to Desroches, and he had recognized the possibility of letting it for more than sixty thousand francs at the end of six years. It contained four stores, two on each front, for it stood on the corner of the street.

Cérizet hoped to make twelve thousand francs at least a year, for twelve years, without counting incidental gains, such as premiums given at each renewal of the lease by traders who occupied the stores, and to whom he would give at first but a six years' lease.

He therefore arranged to sell his money-lending business to the Widow Poiret and Cadenet for ten thousand francs: he had amassed thirty thousand, and the two would enable him to pay the year's rent in advance, usually demanded of chief tenants by Paris house-owners as a guarantee. Cérizet had passed a happy night. His sleep was filled with beautiful dreams, in which he saw himself on the way to do an honest business, to become a worthy citizen, like Thuillier, Minard, and many others. He gave up the idea of acquiring the house then building on the Rue Geoffroy-Marie. But, lo, he had a waking of which he had not dreamt. He found Fortune standing before him, pouring out riches from a gilded horn, in the person of Madame Cardinal.

He had always been good friends with this woman, and he had promised for a whole year to let her have the money neces-

sary to buy an ass and a small cart, so that she could carry on her business on a larger scale, and go from Paris to the suburbs.

Now Mme. Cardinal, widow of a porter in the Market, had only daughter whose beauty Cérizet had often heard tell by her mother's cronies. Olympe Cardinal was about teen when, in 1837, Cérizet began to "bank" in the quar- and with a view to infamous libertinism, he had paid h attention to the mother, whom he had rescued from et poverty, hoping to make Olympe his mistress; but in is the daughter left her mother and had undoubtedly de her own life," to use the term given by the Parisian lace to the destruction of the most precious gifts of nature and youth.

Searching for a girl in Paris is like looking for a minnow the Seine; it is all chance if it comes to net. The chance Mother Cardinal, who was standing treat to a chum, ed the Bobino Theatre, where she recognized in the lead- lady her own daughter, and who for three years had been der the domination of the first comedian. The mother at was flattered to see her daughter in a lovely gauze be- ngled attire, her hair dressed like that of a duchess, wear- clocked stockings, satin shoes, and applauded when she ared; but she ended by shouting from her seat:

"You shall hear from me again, murderess of your mother! soon know whether miserable play-actors have any right ome and debauch girls of sixteen!"

She waited at the stage door to intercept her daughter, who wisely dropped down from the stage and gone out with udience instead of going out by the stage entrance to the re, where the Widow Cardinal and Mother Mahoudeau, ntimate, were making such an infernal din that the es of the police were called for. Before these represen- es of law and order the two women lowered the tone eir voices. The mother was told that at sixteen years aughter was old enough to go on the stage; and that in- of shouting at the stage door after the manager, she

could bring him before a justice of the peace or the police court, at her choice.

The next day Mme. Cardinal intended to consult Cérizet, as he was in the office of a justice of the peace; but before arriving at his den on the Rue des Poules she met a porter who lived in the same house as an old uncle of hers, one Toupillier, who told her that the old man had barely two days to live, being in the last extremity.

"Well, what can I do?" asked the Widow Cardinal.

"We count on you, dear Madame Cardinal; you won't forget the good advice we give you. Here's the thing: For the last month or so your poor uncle, who has been unable to get around, trusted me to collect his rent for his house on Rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, and the arrears of dividends due on a Treasury bond for eighteen hundred francs ——"

And now the eyes of the Widow Cardinal became staring instead of wandering.

"Yes, my dear," continued the worthy Perrache, a little hump-backed porter; "and as you are the only one who ever thinks of him, why we thought, as you sometimes came to see him, and brought him a bit of fish at times, why, he might leave you something in his will. My wife has been taking care of him lately. She mentioned you to him, but he did not wish you to know that he was so sick. You see, it is time for you to show yourself. *Dame!* he has not attended to his business for two months."

"You might well think, you old leather-thumper," replied Mother Cardinal to the porter, who had been a shoemaker, "that the hair would grow in the palm of my hand before I could imagine such a thing." Then she hurried off at her top-rate of speed to the wretched garret in which her uncle lived. "What?" said she, "my Uncle Toupillier rich! The good beggar of the church of Saint-Sulpice."

"Ah!" the porter responded, "but he fed well. Every night when he went to bed he took with him his best friend—a bottle of Roussillon wine. My wife has tasted it, but he told us it was cheap stuff, six-sous wine. The wine-merchant in the Rue des Canettes furnished him with it."

"Don't you let drop one word of all this, my good fellow," d the widow. "I'll remember you if anything comes of ."

This Toupillier, an old drum-major in the Guards, had e into the service of the church two years before 1789 by oming the Swiss (or sexton) of Saint-Sulpice. The Revo- on deprived him of that post, and he fell into abject erty. He then took up the profession of model, for he *yed* a fine physique.

When worship was again allowed, he resumed his staff; but 1816 he was dismissed, as much on account of his immoral- as for his political opinions; he passed as a Bonapartist. rtheless, as a sort of pension, he was allowed to stand the door and distribute the holy water. Later on an un- tunate business, which will presently be related, caused n to lose his holy sprinkler; but, still finding means to ng about the sanctuary, he was finally suffered at the r of the church as a lic beggar. At this time, being enty-two years old, he ma himself ninety-six, going into ness as a centenarian.

In the whole of Paris it was impossible to find a beard and r such as Toupillier's. He walked bent nearly double; in trembling hand he carried a cane—a hand that looked as overed with the lichen that grows on granite; in the other eld out the classic hat, greasy, broad-brimmed, and bat- d, into which there fell an abundance of alms. His legs, thed in rags and bandages, dragged along a pair of ched overshoes of coarse matting, hiding excellent com- table inner soles of horse hair. He smeared his face with in ingredients, which gave it an appearance of some late e illness and furrowed it with wrinkles, and he played senility of centenarism most admirably. He had become dred in 1830, although in reality but eighty years old. was chief of the beggars, the lord of the place; and all rs who came to beg under the porches of the church, safe the persecutions of the police by the protection of the on and holy-water sprinkler and the parish church, had ay him a kind of tithing.

When an heir, a bridegroom, or a godfather said, as he came out of church: "Here, this is for all of you, don't bother any of my party," Toupillier, named by the sexton, his successor, to receive these alms, pocketed three-quarters and gave one-quarter only to his acolytes, and their tribute was one sou per day. Money and wine were his two remaining passions; but he regulated the second one, giving himself up entirely to the first, not, however, neglecting his personal comfort. He drank only in the evening, after dinner, when the church was closed; he slept every night for twenty years in the arms of drunkenness—his last mistress. By daybreak he was at his post with all his appliances. From morning till noon—when he took his dinner at the shop of Père Lathuile, made famous by Charlet,—he gnawed his breadcrusts, and he gnawed them like an artist, with a resignation which brought him many alms. The beadle and sprinkler, with whom he most likely had an understanding, would say of him:

"He is a poor man of the church; he used to know the Curé Languet, who built Saint-Sulpice; he was sexton here for twenty years; before and after the Revolution; he is now a hundred years old."

This little biography, known to all the worshipers, was the best of advertisements, and no beggar's hat in all Paris was better filled. He bought his house in 1826, and in 1830 invested in the Funds. From the two sources he must have made something like six thousand francs per annum, and most likely he put some out in Cérizet's manner, for the cost of his house was forty thousand francs, and he had forty-eight thousand in the Funds. His niece, as much deceived by her uncle as were the porters, the minor church functionaries, and the charitable worshipers, believed him to be poorer than herself, and when she had any unsalable fish she would carry some to the poor man.

She now thought herself justified in getting her reward for her liberality and pity for an uncle who doubtless had a multitude of unknown relatives, for she was the third and

last daughter of her family; she had four brothers, and her father, a hand-cart merchant, had told her in her childhood of three aunts and four uncles, all of whom had been neglected by Dame Fortune.

After making an inspection of the sick man, Mother Cardinal hurried off to consult Cérizet, telling him how she had found her daughter, and the reasons, suspicions, and intuitions which led her to believe that her uncle Toupillier had a bag of gold hidden in his pallet, for she knew she was ignorant to be able, successfully, to get the property unless. The banker of the poor, like other scavengers, had at last found diamonds in the slime he had been raking over for four years, always looking to pick up such a chance. This, then, was the secret of his gentle dealing with the man whom he had sworn to ruin. One can imagine his anxiety while waiting the return of the Widow Cardinal, to whom this crafty weaver of shady schemes had given the means of verifying her suspicions in regard to the existence of the treasure, promising her complete success if she would allow him to reap this harvest. He was not the man to shrink from a crime should necessity arise, especially when he could force others to run the risk while he reaped the benefit. He would buy the house in the Rue Geoffroy-Marie, and he would become a Parisian bourgeois, a capitalist, able to carry on an extensive business.

"My Benjamin," said the huckster, rushing into Cérizet's office, with a face inflamed as much by cupidity as haste, "my uncle sleeps on more than one hundred thousand francs in gold; and I'm sure that the Perraches, under pretence of caring for him, have an eye on the hoard."

"Divided among forty heirs," said Cérizet, "it won't be much of a fortune for each. Listen here, Mother Cardinal. I'll marry your daughter; give her your uncle's gold and I'll leave to you the Funds and the house for life."

"Shall we run no risk?"

"None at all."

"Done!" said Madame Widow Cardinal, clasping hands

with her future son-in-law. "Six thousand francs a year—oh! the jolly life!"

"And a son-in-law like me, besides," added the amiable Cérizet.

"I will be a bourgeoise (female citizen) of Paris."

"Now," resumed he, after they had embraced each other, "I must look over the ground. Do not leave there; tell the porter you expect a doctor. I shall be the doctor; when I come you mustn't know me."

"You're no fool, you old rogue," said la Cardinal, giving him a punch in the stomach by way of farewell.

An hour after, Cérizet, dressed in black, disguised in a rusty wig and an artistically made-up face, arrived in the Rue Honoré-Chevalier, in a coach. He asked the shoemaker-porter to conduct him to the lodging of a poor man named Toupillier.

"Monsieur," said the porter, "is it the doctor that Madame Cardinal is waiting for?"

Cérizet had no doubt considered the seriousness of the rôle he was playing, for he evaded a reply.

"Is this the way?" said he, directing his steps by chance towards one side of the court.

"No, monsieur," said Perrache, conducting him to a back stairway, which led to the garret occupied by the pauper.

The resource of questioning the coachman remained, and we will leave the porter to carry on his inquiries in that direction.

The house in which Toupillier lived is one of those which have been compelled to lose one-half by being cut through in widening the street, for the Rue Honoré-Chevalier is one of the narrowest in the Saint-Sulpice quarter. The owner, forbidden by law to repair it, was compelled to rent out the wretched building as it was. This building, excessively ugly from the street, comprised one story above the ground floor, with attics, and a small square wing on each side. The court ended in a garden planted with trees, which belonged to the apartments on the first floor. This garden, separated from

court by a fence, would have enabled a wealthy owner to the house to the city and to rebuild on the courtyard. the entire first story had been let, on a lease of eighteen rs, to a mysterious personage, whose reserve neither the al inquisitiveness of the porter nor the curiosity of the r tenants had been able to penetrate.

his tenant, now seventy years old, had constructed a stairway leading to a window of one of the wings which ked on the garden, so that he could descend and take his promenade without passing through the court. The left side of the ground-floor was occupied by a bookstitcher who years before had transformed the coach-house and stables o work rooms; the other half was occupied by a bookbinder. The stitcher and the binder each had a share in the attics looking on the street. The attics above one of the wings in rear belonged to the apartments of the mysterious personage. Finally, Toupillier paid a hundred francs for the et above the other small wing on the left, and which was ached by a staircase dimly lighted.

The coach-way to the courtyard was made in a circular n, this shape being indispensable in a street so narrow that carriages could not pass.

Cérizet laid hands on the rope that served as a hand-rail to nd of ladder that ascended to the room where the alleged nnarian lay dying; in this chamber was being played the ous spectacle of pretended poverty.

In Paris all that is done with an end in view is done to ection. The would-be poor are as clever in such lines as storekeepers in dressing their show windows, or as the wealthy are in obtaining credit.

floor had never been swept; the bricks had disappeared er a litter of filth, dust, dried mud, and every kind of sh thrown down by Toupillier. A poor cast-iron stove, a pipe bricked into a crumbling fireplace, was the best ring thing in the lair. In a recess was a bed with a pole from which hung a curtain of green serge, eaten lace by moths. The nearly useless window had a dense

coat of grease on its panes, which dispensed with the necessity for a curtain. The whitewashed walls were fuliginously tinted with the smoke of wood and peat burned in the stove. On the mantel stood a broken water pitcher, two bottles, and a cracked plate. A miserable, worm-eaten bureau held his linen and decent clothes; the other furniture consisted of a night-table of the commonest kind, another table worth about forty sous, and two kitchen chairs, with the straw seats about gone. The very picturesque costume of the centenarian beggar hung from a nail, and below it, on the floor, the shapeless coarse hempen gaiters which served him as shoes, and, with his prodigious staff and his hat, formed a sort of panoply of poverty.

Upon entering, Cérizet glanced quickly at the old man, whose head, resting on a dingy pillow, without a slip, resembled one of those singular profiles which engravers of the last century amused themselves in drawing, with a setting of menacing rocks,—and which was outlined in black on the deep green of the curtain. Toupillier, a man nearly six feet tall, was fixedly regarding an imaginary object at the foot of his bed. He did not move when he heard the heavy door creak on its hinges,—a door iron-plated, and with a strong lock which securely protected his domicile.

"Is he conscious?" said Cérizet, before whom Mme. Cardinal started back, for she did not recognize him until he spoke.

"Very nearly," said Mme. Cardinal.

"Come out on the stairs, for we don't want him to hear us. This is what we must do," whispered he to his future mother-in-law. "He is weak, but he isn't so very sick-looking; we shall have about a week before us. I'll find a doctor that will suit us. I'll return later with six poppy-heads. In the state he is, you see, a good strong tea of poppy will send him off to sleep. I'll send you in a cot-bed, under the pretence of your sleeping here. Then we'll move him from one bed to the other; thus when we've counted the money hidden in his mattress we can easily carry it off. But we ought to know

what sort of tenants there are in the barrack. The doctor will tell us if he is likely to live a few days, and above all if he is in a condition to make a will."

"My son!"

"But we must learn about the occupants; for if Perrache gives the alarm—so many lodgers, so many spies."

"Bah! I know all that already," replied Mme. Cardinal. "Du Portail, the little old man who rents the first floor, in charge of a mad girl whom I heard called Lydie this morning by an old Flemish woman named Katt. The old man has only one servant, a valet, another old man named Simeno, who does everything but cook."

"But the binder and the stitcher," replied Cérizet, "go to work very early in the morning. But we will see," added in the tone of a man who has not fully decided upon his . "I'll go to the mayor's office, get Olympe's register of birth, and have the banns published. Next Saturday week, the wedding."

"How he goes it, this old rascal!" said Mother Cardinal, giving this formidable son-in-law a push with her shoulder.

Upon going down stairs Cérizet was surprised to see little du Portail walking in the garden with one of the most important personages of the government, Count Martial de la Roche-Hugon. He lingered about the courtyard examining the old house, built in the reign of Louis XIV., the yellow walls of which, though of cut stone, seemed bowed like old caryatides. He looked into the workshops and noticed the number of workmen. The house was as silent as a cloister. Having himself observed, Cérizet went away, thinking of the difficulties attending the carrying off of the hidden treasure, though it was lightly covered.

"If I take it away by night, the porters will be on the look-out; if by day twenty persons will witness the act. It is not easy to conceal twenty-five thousand francs in gold on one's person."

Society has two forms of perfection; the first is a stage of civilization in which morality, being equally infused, does

not permit of crime even in thought; the Jesuits have reached this point, which was prevalent in the early church; the second is the state of another civilization in which the mutual supervision of its citizens renders crime an impossibility. The end which modern society has placed in view is the latter, namely, that a crime shall offer such difficulties that a man must be really without reason to attempt it. In fact, none of the misdeeds which the law does not reach really goes unpunished, and the verdict of society is much more severe than that of the courts. If a will is destroyed without a single witness, as in the case of the postmaster of Nemours, the crime is tracked by the keen scrutiny of virtue as a theft is scented by the police. No wrong-doing takes place unnoticed, and wherever there is a moral lapse, the scar is ineradicable.

Things can no more be disposed of than men, especially in Paris, where objects are numbered, houses guarded, streets observed, and squares looked after.

To live at ease crime must have a sanction like that granted by the Bourse, or like that given to Cérizet by his clients, who never grumbled, and who would, indeed, be troubled in mind if their flayer had not been found in his kitchen on Tuesdays.

"Well, my dear sir," said the porter's wife, as Cérizet went past the lodge; "how is that friend of God, the poor man?"

"I am not the doctor," Cérizet made answer, who now decidedly renounced the part; "I am Madame Cardinal's man of business; I have advised her to have a cot-bed brought in, so she may be here day and night, though she may have to engage a regular nurse."

"I could give her good service," said Mme. Perrache; "I nurse women when they are confined."

"Well, we'll see," said Cérizet. "I'll arrange all that. Who is your first-floor tenant?"

"Monsieur du Portail. He has lodged here thirty years. He lives on his income, a very respectable old man. You

know bondholders live on their interest. He was once in business. For more than eleven years he has been trying to restore the reason of a daughter of one of his friends, Mademoiselle Lydie de la Peyrade. She is well cared for, I tell you, by two famous physicians, and only this morning there was a consultation. But up to now nothing has cured her; they have to watch her pretty close, too, I tell you; for at times she gets up in the night."

"Mademoiselle Lydie de la Peyrade!" exclaimed Cérizet. "You are quite sure that is her name?"

"Madame Katt, her nurse, who does the little cooking for the household, has told me a thousand times, though, as a general thing, neither Monsieur Bruno, the valet, nor Madame Katt chatter much. You might as well speak to the walls as to try to get any information from them. We have been porters here for twenty years and haven't yet found out anything about Monsieur du Portail. Besides that, he owns the house alongside. You can see the door, there. Well, you see, he can go out that way at his will, and receive company and we know nothing about it. Our landlord knows no more than we do. When any one rings at the side door Monsieur Bruno opens it."

"Then you didn't see the gentleman who is talking to him in the garden go by this way?"

"No! Certainly not!"

"Ah!" said Cérizet, as he got into the coach, "this is the daughter of Théodose's uncle. Du Portail may be the benefactor who once sent two thousand five hundred francs to the rascal. I might send an anonymous letter to the little fellow telling him of the danger that Monsieur l'Avocat is owing to those twenty-five thousand francs' worth of advances."

An hour later a complete cot-bed had arrived for Mme. Cardinal, to whom the inquisitive porter's wife offered her services to bring her something to eat.

"Do you want to see the curé?" asked Mme. Cardinal of the old man; she had noticed that the arrival of the bed had roused him from his somnolence.

"I want some wine," he replied.

"How do you find yourself now, Father Toupillier?" asked Mme. Perrache, coaxingly.

"I tell you I want some wine," repeated the old fellow with a scarcely looked-for energy.

"We must first know if it is good for you, Unky Bunky," said she, caressingly. "Wait till the doctor gives his idea."

"Doctor! I won't have one," cried Toupillier. "What are you doing here, anyhow? I don't want anybody."

"My good uncle, I just came to know if you could fancy a bit of something tasty; I have a nice fresh flounder: eh! a *teenty* flounder served with a dash of lemon-juice?"

"It's fine, is your fish," answered Toupillier; "it is rotten; the last you brought me, six weeks ago, is still in the closet; you can take it away with you."

"Gracious me, how ungrateful sick people are," said la Cardinal, speaking low to Madame Perrache.

At the same time, to show her solicitude, she re-arranged the pillow under the head of the sick man, saying, "There, unky, isn't that better?"

"Let me alone!" howled Toupillier in a rage. "I want to be alone. Give me some wine, and leave me in peace."

"Don't get vexed, little uncle; we'll find you some wine."

"The wine at six—Rue des Canettes," cried the beggar.

"Yes," said Mother Cardinal; "but let me count up my coppers. I want to get the best he has in the cellar. You see, an uncle is a kind of second father; we ought to do what's right by him."

While speaking she sat down, her legs wide apart, on one of the two dilapidated chairs, then turned out on her apron all the contents of her pockets: a knife, her snuff-box, two pawn-tickets, some crusts of bread, and a handful of coppers, from which she extracted a few silver-pieces.

This exhibition, intended to show a most generous and hearty devotion, had no result. Toupillier did not seem to have noticed it. Exhausted by the feverish energy with which he had demanded his favorite remedy, he made an

effort to change his position, and turning his back to his two nurses, after having again murmured, "Wine! wine!" nothing more was heard from him but stertorous breathing, indicating that his lungs were filling up.

"I must go there for his wine," said Madame Cardinal, in a bad humor, returning to her pocket the miscellaneous apartment she had taken from it.

"If you do not wish to trouble yourself, Mother Cardinal——" said the portress, always eager to offer her services.

The huckster hesitated for a moment; but thinking that perhaps she might get some light from a talk with the wineseller, and especially as long as Toupillier was lying over the treasure, the portress might safely be left alone with him:

"Thank you, Madame Perrache," said she, "but I must become acquainted with his tradespeople."

Then spying behind the night-table a dirty bottle which might hold about two litres:

"Wasn't it Rue des Canettes that he said?" she asked the portress.

"Corner of Rue Guisarde," was the reply. "Mister Lebon, a big, handsome man, with fine whiskers and a bald head." Then, dropping her voice, "His six-sous wine is the Roussillon. The wineseller understands. It will be enough sufficient to let him know that you come from his customer, the beggar of Saint-Sulpice."

"I don't need telling twice," said la Cardinal; she opened the door and made a false start, for she returned and said: "What does he burn in the stove, in case I need to heat anything for him?"

"*Dame!*" replied the portress, "he has not made much provision for winter, now we are in mid-summer."

"And not a saucepan or a pot!" continued Mother Cardinal. "*Mon Dieu!* what housekeeping! I must get in some wood and fuel; I hope nobody will see what I bring."

"I'll lend you a rush-basket," said the ever-officious portress.

"Thanks! I'll buy a market-basket," answered the fish-

hawker, who was more anxious as to what she could carry away than what she might bring. "I guess there's an Auvergnat somewhere about here who sells wood and charcoal?"

"At the corner of the Rue Férou—you'll easily find the place; a fine establishment, where the logs are painted on an awning like so many bottles; they look like faces that want to talk to you."

"I can see that from here," said Madame Cardinal.

Mme. Cardinal had hesitated about leaving the portress alone with the sick man. She now acted a part of deep hypocrisy:

"Madame Perrache," said she, "you won't leave him, the dear man, till I return?"

It has been observed that in this affair Cérizet had not definitely decided on the plan to be adopted. The rôle of physician, that he had thought first of assuming, had caused him some fear, and he had introduced himself to Madame Perrache as the business man of his accomplice. When again by himself he reconsidered the matter, and saw that his plan of combining the functions of a physician, a sick-nurse, and a notary was surrounded by serious difficulties. A legal will in favor of Madame Cardinal was not the work of a moment. A long time was needed to familiarize the stubborn and suspicious mind of the pauper with this idea; and death was at the door, and with a knock might upset the wisest calculations.

As to re-enacting the scene of de Regnard's "Légataire," it was not to be thought of in the midst of the refinements of a police-system and of a civilization the main object of which seems to be to deprive the drama and romance of the last vital air left them to breathe.

No doubt, by renouncing the idea of inducing the dying man to make a will, the income of the eighteen hundred francs invested in the Funds and the house in Rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth would go to the heirs-at-law; and Mother Cardinal, for whom he hoped to secure these two properties, would receive only her share. But to abandon that portion of the

property in sight was the surest way to secure the hidden remainder. The latter, moreover, secured beyond peradventure, what would prevent returning to the attempt concerning the will? Reducing the problem to its simplest terms, Cérizet resumed the scheme of the poppy-heads, already mentioned; and provided with this weapon of war, was on his way back to Toupillier's, to give new instructions to Madame Cardinal, when he met her, having on her arm the basket which she had just purchased, in which was the sick man's panacea.

"So!" said the usurer, "this is how you guard your post?"

"I had to go out to fetch him some wine," replied la Cardinal. "He howled like one broiling on a gridiron that he wanted to be left in peace, and that he be given his draught. The man's idea is that Roussillon is the one thing needed for his cure; I'll give him a stomach-full; when he's boozy, perhaps he'll be quieter."

"Quite right," said Cérizet, pompously. "It is bad policy to contradict a sick person; but this wine can be improved by mixing it with these"—lifting one of the lids of the basket, he here slipped in the poppy-heads. "It will enable the poor man to get a fine sleep of five or six hours; this evening I'll call upon you; I don't fancy there'll be much to prevent us examining the value of the heritage."

"I understand!" said Mme. Cardinal, with a wink.

"Until this evening, then," said Cérizet, without prolonging the conversation.

He felt that he was engaged in a difficult and suspicious business, and did not wish to be seen talking in the street with his accomplice.

When Mme. Cardinal reached her uncle's garret, she found him still sleeping, and relieved Mme. Perrache, bidding her adieu at the door, as she received a quantity of wood roughly sawed. Into an earthen pot of the right size to fit the hole in the stoves of the poor in which they put their soup-kettles, she threw the poppy-heads, and poured over it about two-thirds of the wine she had brought; then she

lighted the fire under the pot so as to get the decoction as soon as possible.

The crackling of the wood and the warmth spreading about the room brought Toupillier out of his stupor. Seeing the stove lighted—

"A fire here!" cried he; "do you want to burn the house down?"

"Why, Unky-Nunky," replied la Cardinal, "this is wood that I bought myself, to warm your wine. The doctor doesn't wish you to drink it cold."

"Where is that wine?" asked Toupillier, who was calmed somewhat by the thought that the fire was not burning at his expense.

"It must boil first," said his nurse; "the doctor insisted on that. Still, if you'll keep quiet I'll give you a little, just to wet your whistle; I'll take that upon myself, but don't say anything about it."

"I won't have a doctor come here; they are scoundrels who put men out of the world," cried Toupillier, reanimated by the thought of his drink.

"Well, the wine!" he added in the tone of a man whose patience was exhausted.

Convinced that if this compliance with his desire did no harm, it could do no good, Madame Cardinal filled a glass half full, and while with one hand she presented it to the sick man, with the other she raised him up so that he could drink.

When she passed it to him he grasped it with his bony, eager fingers, gulped it down at a breath, and—

"What a little drop, and watered besides," he said.

"Ah, now! don't say that, Unky-Nunky; I fetched it myself from old Legrelu's, and gave it to you pure. But when the rest has simmered a bit you can have it all, the doctor says."

Toupillier resigned himself, shrugging his shoulders.

At the end of fifteen minutes she brought him a cup filled to the brim with the mixture. The avidity with which he

nk it did not permit him to notice the taste of the wine, as he swallowed the last drops the bitter, nauseating taste ed itself; he flung the cup on the bed and cried out he had poisoned him.

Get out! there is your poison," replied the huckster, g the few drops that remained into her own mouth, ring that if the wine did not taste as usual it was because outh had a "bad taste."

fore the dispute was ended the narcotic began to take in an hour he was sound asleep.

her leisure while waiting for Cérizet, Madame Cardinal an idea. She thought that to facilitate the going and g which would be necessary when the time arrived to the treasure, it would be a good thing to have Per- 's vigilance relaxed. Consequently, after taking care row the poppy-heads away, she called the concierge, and to her:

Mother Perrache, take a taste of *his* wine. You would thought that he was ready for a cask, wouldn't you? a cupful satisfied him."

Here's to you!" said the portress, clinking glasses with rdinal, who was careful to fill her glass with the natural

less distinguished connoisseur than the beggar, Mme. she found nothing amiss in the insidious liquid, for she drank it had become cold; on the contrary, she de- d that it was quite velvety, and wished her husband could had some. After a long gossip the two separated. Mme. nal ate some food and then indulged in a siesta which until dark.

r first act was to glance at the patient's bed. His was disturbed, and he called out in a loud voice:

Diamonds! diamonds! When I am dead, and not be- "

What's that?" said Madame Cardinal. "Nothing more nting. That he should have diamonds!"

d as she saw that Toupillier was evidently the prey of a

violent nightmare, in place of relieving him by aiding him to change his position, she inclined her head that she might not lose a single word, hoping to receive some important revelation.

At this moment a slight knock at the door, from which the excellent nurse had taken the precaution to withdraw the key, announced the arrival of Cérizet.

"Well?" said he, as he came in.

"Well, he's taken the dose. He's been for these four hours as dead as a Jesus. He was dreaming and talking of diamonds, just now."

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Cérizet, "I should not be astonished if we should find some. These beggars pile up everything when they get miserly."

"By-the-by, little father, what was your idea in telling Mme. Perrache that you are my man of business and not a doctor? It was arranged this morning that you were to come as a doctor——"

Cérizet did not wish to admit that the assumption of this title appeared a serious matter to him. He feared it might discourage his accomplice.

"I saw that the woman was about to ask medical advice, so I got out of it in that way."

"Ah!" said la Cardinal, "great minds think alike; that was also my idea,—to give the matter a turn like that. To see a man of business come here gave Madame Perrache something to ponder over. Did the Perraches see you come in?"

"It seemed to me that the woman was asleep in her chair," replied Cérizet.

"She should be—sound," said la Cardinal, with a significant shrug.

"What! Really?" asked Cérizet.

"*Parbleu!*" said the fish-hawker. "Enough for one is enough for two; I gave her the rest of the dose."

"As to her husband," said Cérizet, "he is there, for as he drew his thread he made me a gracious sign of recognition, as I passed, which I could well have dispensed with."

"Leave it till night has fallen; then we'll show a little game that will make his eyes stick out."

In fact, a quarter of an hour after, with a nerve that astonished the usurer, the fishwife improvised a farce of seeing a "monsieur" out, who begged her to not take such trouble. Under cover of seeing the pretended doctor as far as the door on the street, half-way across the courtyard she feigned that the wind had blown out her light, and, under the pretext of relighting it, she extinguished Perrache's light as well. This play, accompanied with much gesticulations and loquacious vociferations, was so cleverly done, that the porter or any judge would not have hesitated to make oath that the doctor, whom he had ushered in that evening, had come out from the beggar's room and left the house between nine and ten.

When the two conspirators were thus tranquilly in possession of the theatre of their operations, la Cardinal borrowed Béranger unconsciously, and hung up her old shawl at the window, as though to screen some Lisette's amours. In the Luxembourg life's stir is over early. Before ten all was quiet inside the house as well as out. A neighbor absorbed in serial romance alone kept the conspirators in check for a time, but as soon as he had extinguished his light, they at proposed to get to work at once. In beginning without delay they would be more certain that the sleeper would still be under the influence of the narcotic. If it did not take long to find the treasure la Cardinal could have the porte-cochère gate left open, under pretence that she might have to go to the apothecary's for some medicine needed on account of a sudden change in the condition of the sick man. Then the porters acted as porters mostly do, when in their first sleep, pull the cord of the latch without getting out of bed. Cérizet could get out at the same time, and they could easily carry off at least a portion of the cash and place it safely away.

Powerful enough in the council, Cérizet was lacking in physical strength, and without the assistance of the muscular

Cardinal would never have succeeded in raising from his bed what might be called the corpse of the ex-drum-major. Under his heavy sleep, and entirely unconscious, Toupillier had become an inert mass, which fortunately could be handled without much precaution. Doubling her strength under the spur of her cupidity, the athletic Madame Cardinal, with the slight assistance rendered by the man of business, accomplished with little difficulty the task of transferring her uncle, and the bed was at last open to her search.

At first they found nothing, and the fish-hawker, being pressed to explain how that morning she was sure of her uncle sleeping on one hundred thousand francs in gold, was obliged to confess that her conversation with Perrache and her brilliant imagination were the basis of her pretended certainty. Cérizet was furious. After all this time cherishing the idea and hope of a fortune, and making up his mind to embark on dangerous and compromising undertakings, in the end to find himself face to face with emptiness! The disappointment was so cruel that, only that he dreaded an encounter with so muscular a future mother-in-law, he would have been carried to extreme rage.

At the least he could vent his choler in words. Rudely assailed, la Cardinal would only keep saying that all was not yet lost, and, with the faith that removes mountains, continued to tumble the bed over from top to bottom.

She was about to empty the mattress, that she had vainly explored in every way; but Cérizet would not permit this extreme measure, remarking that after her autopsy of the mattress, a mass of straw would remain on the floor which might give rise to suspicions.

So that she might have nothing to reproach herself with, la Cardinal, notwithstanding Cérizet's objections, who thought it ridiculous, insisted on removing the sacking of the bedstead bottom; certainly the vainless search had whetted her faculties, for when she lifted the wood frame she heard the sound of some small object, which had become detached, as it fell on the floor.

Ascribing to this incident a possibly undue importance, the explorer soon got a light and after some time found a f polished steel, half an inch long, among the filth, of the use to her was an inexplicable mystery.

"at's a key!" exclaimed Cérizet, who at once changing indifference let his imagination off at a gallop.

Ah, ah! you see?" said la Cardinal, triumphantly; "but can it open?" added she, after reflection; "a doll's

Not at all," answered Cérizet. "This is a modern in- on, and very strong locks may be opened with this little ument."

the same time he made a rapid survey, embracing all rniture in the chamber, went to the bureau, drew out rawers, looked into the stove, under the table; but not a could he see of a single lock which this little key would

l at once Mme. Cardinal had a bright idea.

ay," said she; "I noticed that as he lay on his bed the ef never ceased to keep his eye on the wall opposite

closet concealed in the wall? Indeed, that's not im- le," said Cérizet, excitedly taking up the candle.

r he had carefully examined the door in the alcove faced the head of the bed, he found nothing but heavy ngs of cobwebs and dust. He then tried the sense of which is occasionally keener, and sounded and felt the ll over. At the spot where Toupillier had ever kept his found a circumscribed space which was certainly hol- nd it was wood. He rolled his handkerchief into a nd rubbed the spot hard, and under the layer of dirt leaned he found a little oak board closely adjusted in ll; on one end of this board was a little round hole, this keyhole that the key fitted.

e Cérizet unlocked the door, which he did without lty, la Cardinal, who held up the candle, became pale breathless; but, cruel disappointment, the closet was

opened and nothing was to be seen but an empty space, vainly illuminated by the candle which the fishwife had gerly thrust in. Leaving the fury to shriek out her desp ag ex-clamations and to shower upon her beloved uncle every con-ceivable abusive epithet, Cérizet kept calm and quiet.

After putting his arm in the opening and around the bot-tom of it, he cried:

"Here is an iron box!" adding impatiently, "Give me more light, Madame Cardinal."

Then as the light did not sufficiently illuminate the empty space he wished to explore, he snatched the candle out of the bottle-neck in which it had been stuck, and taking it in his hand passed it carefully over every part of the iron plate which had been discovered.

"No lock!" said he after the most minute examination; "there must be a secret spring."

"The old curmudgeon is a traitor!" said Madame Cardinal, while the bony fingers of Cérizet were searching every cranny of the place.

"Ah! I have it!" said he, after his tappings had lasted more than half an hour.

During this time Mme. Cardinal's life seemed to be sus-pended. Under the pressure of his fingers the iron plate slid into the wall, and, among a mass of gold thrown loosely into a deep recess, lay a red morocco case, which from its size and general appearance promised magnificent booty.

"I take the diamonds for *dot*," said Cérizet, when he saw the splendid jewels it contained. "You, my mother, would not know how to dispose of them; I'll leave the gold for your share. As to the Funds and the house, they are not worth the trouble of getting the worthy man to make another will."

"Just a minute, my boy!" replied la Cardinal, who found this division rather too summary; "we will first count the cash."

"Hush!" said Cérizet, stopping in a listening attitude.

"Why?" asked la Cardinal.

"Did you not hear something moving downstairs?"

"I heard nothing," replied the fishwife.

Gérizet made her a sign to remain silent, and listened with [illegible] attention.

"I hear the sound of steps on the stairs," said he soon [illegible]; then he hastily restored the jewel-case in the closet and [illegible] tried to lower the panel.

While he was exhausting himself with useless efforts the [illegible] drew nearer.

"Indeed, yes, somebody is coming," said la Cardinal in a [illegible]. Then, grasping at a chance of escape, she added, "Ah, [illegible] it is only the mad girl, I suppose, they say she walks in the night."

If it was the insane girl she had a key to the room, for it was inserted in the lock. With a rapid glance la Cardinal measured the distance between herself and the door. Would [illegible] have time to slide the bolt? But calculating that she would be too late, she blew out the candle to have at least [illegible] chance to escape.

[illegible] less precaution. The marplot who came in had a light [illegible] hand.

When she saw that the intruder in their business was a little [illegible] man of puny appearance, Mme. Cardinal, her eyes flam[illegible] sprang before him, like a lioness seeking to protect her [illegible] from the hunter.

"Calm yourself, my good woman," said the old man, [illegible] ringly, "the police are sent for, they will be here in a moment."

The word "police" broke, as the common saying is, Mme. Cardinal's legs.

"But, monsieur, the police!" said she; "we are not robbers."

"Just the same, were I in your place, I shouldn't wait for [illegible]," said the little old man; "they make unfortunate mis[illegible] at times."

"[illegible] I *get*, then?" said the fish-hawker, incredulously.

"Yes, when you return to me anything that may by *accident* have gotten into your pockets."

"Oh! my good sir, I have nothing in my hands, nothing in my pockets; I wouldn't harm anybody in the world; I am only here to look after this poor cherub, my uncle; search me if you want to."

"That will do; now get out," said the old man.

The fish-hawker needed no second telling, but rapidly went down the stair. Cérizet seemed about to take the same way.

"You, monsieur, that is another matter," said the old man; "you and I can have a little chat together; but if you prove tractable, things may be satisfactorily arranged."

Whether the narcotic had ceased to operate, or whether the noise around him had aroused him, Toupillier opened his eyes and looked about in a dazed manner. Then in a moment, seeing his cherished closet open, his excitement gave him strength to cry out two or three times, in a manner to awaken the whole house, "Robbers! robbers!"

"No, Toupillier," said the little old man; "you have not been robbed; I arrived in time; nothing has been touched."

"And you, why don't you arrest that villain?" said the beggar, pointing to Cérizet.

"Monsieur is not a thief," replied the old man; "on the contrary, he came up with me to give me his help." Then, turning to Cérizet, he said: "I think, my friend, that we had better postpone our interview until the morrow. At ten o'clock come to the adjacent house and inquire for Monsieur du Portail.

"After what has taken place this evening, I ought to forewarn you that it will be for your interest to keep this appointment. I should find you unquestionably, for I have the honor of knowing who you are. You are the person whom the opposition journals for a long time have been in the habit of calling 'the brave Cérizet.'"

Notwithstanding the deep sarcasm of this reminder, seeing that he would not be treated more severely than Madame Cardinal had been, Cérizet was only too happy at this dénoûment; and after having promised to be prompt at the rendezvous, he took himself off speedily.

The next day Cérizet did not fail to appear at the rendez-vous, as directed. Having been recognized through a wicket, he refused to give his name, he was ushered into the study of du Portail, whom he found writing. Without rising, he made a sign that his guest be seated, and went on with his letter. When it was finished, and after he had carefully sealed it with wax, in a manner which bespoke a very precise man, or one who had exercised diplomatic functions, he rang for Bruno, his valet, and, giving him the letter, he said:

"For Monsieur the Justice of the Peace of the arrondissement."

Then he carefully wiped the steel pen that he had used, and symmetrically replaced all the articles that he had moved on his desk. It was only when these little matters had been duly attended to that he turned to Cérizet and said:

"You know that we have lost poor Monsieur Toupillier in the night?"

"Truly, no," said Cérizet, putting on the best look of sympathy he could assume. "This is my first tidings of it."

"You at least might have expected it; when one gives a young man a big bowl of hot wine, narcotized besides,—for other drinking but a little glass, Perrache's wife lay in a lethargy the whole night through,—it becomes quite evident that the catastrophe had been arranged for and hastened."

"I am ignorant, monsieur," said Cérizet with dignity, "of what Madame Cardinal may have given her uncle. Nevertheless I committed an indiscretion in helping that woman to preserve her inheritance to which she gave me assurances that she had a legal right; but I am incapable of attempting the life of that old man; such a thought never entered my head."

"Was it you that wrote me this letter?" said du Portail, sternly, taking a paper from under a Bohemian glass paperweight, and offering it to Cérizet.

"This letter?" replied he, with the hesitation of a man who wonders whether to lie or speak the truth.

"I am sure of what I am saying. I have a mania for autographs; I am positive this is yours, for I have one of them when the Opposition elevated you to the glorious state of martyr. The letter you hold in your hand tells me of the monetary straits of young la Peyrade."

"Well," said the man of the Rue des Poules, "as I knew that you had in your care a demoiselle de la Peyrade, who must be Théodose's cousin, I guessed that you were his unknown protector, and on more than one occasion my friend has received the most generous assistance. Now, having a sincere affection for that poor boy, it was in his interests that I made so bold——"

"You were right," interrupted du Portail. "I am pleased to encounter a friend of his. I will not even conceal from you that this was what saved you last night. But what about those twenty-five thousand francs' worth of acceptances? Is our friend's business in a bad way? Is he leading a dissipated life?"

"On the contrary," replied Cérizet, "he's a puritan. He is an enthusiastic devotee. As an advocate he desires no other clients than the poor. He is, moreover, on the point of making a wealthy marriage."

"Ah! he is to be married; to whom, pray?"

"It is a Mademoiselle Colleville, daughter of the secretary of the mayor of the twelfth arrondissement. This young lady has no fortune of her own, but a Monsieur Thuillier, her godfather, member of the council-general of the Seine, has promised her a suitable dowry."

"And who managed this affair?"

"La Peyrade is very devoted to the Thuillier family, to whom he was introduced by M. Dutocq, justice of the peace of the district."

"But you wrote me that those acceptances were in favor of Monsieur Dutocq. Is it a kind of matrimonial brokerage?"

"Something of the sort," said Cérizet. "You know, monsieur, that such transactions are common enough in Paris; the clergy doesn't disdain putting their finger in them."

"Has the affair gone very far?" asked du Portail.

Yes, and especially during the last few days."

"Well, even if the marriage is a settled thing, I must get , my dear sir, to put an end to it; I have other views for odose—another match to propose to him."

"Pardon me," replied Cérizet, "but to prevent this mar- is to put it beyond Théodose's power to pay his notes; I have the honor to inform you that these acceptances enuine. M. Dutocq is clerk to a justice of the peace, and matters that concern his interest it will not be easy to him listen to reason."

"Monsieur Dutocq's debt," replied du Portail, "you shall rself pay off. You can have an understanding with him the subject. Should not Théodose prove amenable to my jects, those acceptances in our hands might compel him to ; you could sue him in your name, and you will be at expense; I will pay the notes and your costs in suing odose."

"You are a thorough business man, monsieur," said Cérizet, d it is truly a pleasure to be your agent. Perhaps you may rd me some light on why you do me the honor of confiding matter to my hands."

"You mentioned a minute ago the cousin of la Peyrade, Mademoiselle Lydie de la Peyrade. That young lady, no er in her first youth, for she is nearly thirty, is the ral daughter of the celebrated Mademoiselle Beaumesnil, the Theatre-Français, and de la Peyrade, commissary- al of police under the Empire, the uncle of our friend. the moment of his death, which occurred suddenly, ng penniless the daughter whom he adored and whom d recognized, I had been bound with the strongest ties endship to this excellent man."

ll pleased to show that he also had some knowledge of omestic affairs of du Portail, Cérizet responded: "And ave sacredly fulfilled the duties of this friendship, for king to your home this interesting orphan, you have d yourself with a difficult task; for the condition of

mademoiselle's health demands, as I happen to know, the most constant as well as affectionate care."

"Yes," answered du Portail, "the poor child was so cruelly tried by the death of her father that her mind became somewhat affected. But fortunately a change has occurred for the better; yesterday Doctor Bianchon and two other eminent physicians in consultation declared that marriage and a first child would infallibly restore her. You can well see that the remedy is too easy and too pleasant not to be given a trial."

"Then," said Cérizet, "it is to his cousin, Mademoiselle Lydie de la Peyrade, that you propose to marry Théodose."

"You have said it," replied du Portail. "You must not suppose, though, that by accepting this marriage he is displaying a gratuitous devotion. Lydie is agreeable in her person, is talented, has a charming nature, and can bring high favor to bear in her husband's behalf. She has also a pretty fortune, consisting of something left by her mother, of all that I possess, which in default of natural heirs to inherit I intend to secure to her in the marriage contract, and, added to this, she has inherited an important accession the past night."

"How!" said Cérizet; "has that old Toupillier——?"

"By a holograph will, which I have here, the beggar constitutes her his sole legatee; so you see I deserve some credit for taking no action in regard to the escapade of yourself and Madame Cardinal, for it was our property you were trying to pillage."

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Cérizet, "I have no desire to excuse Madame Cardinal's actions. However, as she was the natural heir, dispossessed by a stranger, it seems to me she had some claim to the indulgence you have shown her."

"In this you are mistaken," replied du Portail; "and the seeming liberality of which Mademoiselle de la Peyrade has become the object is simply a restitution."

"A restitution!" exclaimed Cérizet.

"A restitution," repeated du Portail, "and nothing is easier to establish. You remember the theft of diamonds from one of our dramatic celebrities some ten years ago?"

"Yes, certainly; I was at that time editor of one of my rnals, and prepared the Paris items. But, pardon me, the ss who lost them was the famous Mademoiselle Beaunil."

Precisely, the mother of Lydie de La Peyrade."

So that the wretched Toupillier——But no, I remem- the thief was convicted. He was known as Charles hard. He was said to be, under the rose, the natural of a great personage, the Comte de Granville, attorney- ral in Paris under the Restoration."

Well," said du Portail, "it happened thus: The robbery, remember, was committed in a mansion on the Rue du rnon, occupied by Mademoiselle Beaumesnil. Charles hard, a handsome fellow, had the run of her house."

Yes, yes," said Cérizet, "I recall her embarrassment when ave her testimony; and also how she lost her voice when her age."

The robbery," continued du Portail, "was audaciously mitted in the daytime; no sooner had Crochard got the t than he went to the Church of St. Sulpice, where he arranged to meet an accomplice. He was to receive the onds from his hands, and, having a passport already pro- l, he was at once to start for foreign parts. It chanced the expected one was detained for some time and was a arriving at the church. Charles Crochard found him- face to face with a celebrated detective who knew him tly well, as the young rogue had had several encounters the police already. The absence of his friend, the unter with the detective, and a rapid movement made e latter troubled his mind; he thought he was being ed. He lost his head under this idea, and wished him- eli rid of his prize. At this moment he caught sight of llier, then the holy-water distributer. 'My dear fellow,' e, assuring himself that no one could hear him, 'will oblige me by taking care of this little parcel? It is a f lace. I am about calling on a countess near here, does not like to settle her bills. Instead of paying me, she

would wish to see this article, which is a novelty, and she would want it on credit. I prefer not to have it with me. But,' added he, 'on no account touch the paper wrapper, for there is nothing so difficult as to rewrap it in the old creases.'"

"The simpleton!" exclaimed Cérizet, naively; "why, it was a recommendation for the man to open it."

"You are a shrewd moralist," said du Portail. "One hour after, Crochard, finding nothing happened to him, returned to the church to recover his deposit. Toupillier was no longer in the place. You can imagine how, on the next day, at first mass, Charles Crochard approached the holy-water distributer, who had returned to the performance of his duty; but night, as they say, brings counsel; the dear man, with bold effrontery, declared that nothing had been left with him, and he did not know what Crochard was talking about."

"And it was useless to attack him and make a row about it," said Cérizet, who was not far from sympathizing in so bold a play.

"No doubt the robbery was already noised around," du Portail went on, "and Toupillier, a smart fellow, had rightly calculated that the thief by accusing him would discover himself. In the trial Charles Crochard never spoke one word of his misadventure, and, condemned to ten years, six of which he passed on the hulks, during his incarceration he did not open his lips about the treachery."

"That was plucky," said Cérizet. This story attracted him, and he looked at it as a connoisseur and an artist.

"In that interval Madame Beaumesnil died, leaving her daughter some small remains of a great fortune. She mentioned the diamonds, and expressly stated that they should be hers, 'if they were ever recovered.'"

"Ah!" said Cérizet, "that made it bad for Toupillier, for having a man of your mettle to deal with——"

"All thoughts of Charles Crochard were first turned to vengeance on his release; he denounced Toupillier as the receiver of the casket. Taken in hand by the law, he defended himself with such a rare good humor, that, in the failure of

proof of the charge, the judge ended by dismissing him. this affair cost Toupillier his position; he obtained, not at difficulty, the right of begging in the porch of St. ce. As for myself, I was satisfied of his guilt, and notstanding his release, I had the closest watch kept upon but I relied chiefly on my own efforts.

Having no regular business, with plenty of leisure on my I kept on the track of our robber, and made the task masking him the chief aim of my life. At that time he ving in the Rue du Cœur-Volant. I succeeded in rent- chamber adjoining his; and one evening, through a which I had patiently drilled in the wall which separated I saw him take out the casket from a cleverly contrived -place, open it, and gaze upon the contents and fondle The man loved them for themselves alone; he had no ght of converting them into money."

I understand," said Cérizet; "a mania of the same kind Monsieur Cardillac, the jeweler, which has just been drama- :"

The same," returned du Portail; "the wretch was in love them, so that when I entered his room and told him I all, he asked me not to dispossess him of them while he , and at his death his whole hoard of gold, his cash in Funds, and his house should become the heritage of Made- lle de la Peyrade."

If he was honest in his intentions," said Cérizet, "the sition was not a bad one. The interest of the capital sented by the diamonds was largely represented by the inheritance."

Well, my dear sir, I was not mistaken in trusting him. rtheless, I exacted that he should occupy a room in the house as myself; I assisted in building that hiding-place , the secret of which you so ingeniously discovered; but, r ignorance, you did not discover that when you touched spring you also rang a bell in my chamber which l me of any attempt to steal our hoard."

Poor Madame Cardinal," cried Cérizet, with pleasantry, w she was off of her reckoning."

"This is the situation, then. On account of the interest I feel in the nephew of my late friend, and also on considering the relationship, this marriage seems to me most desirable," said du Portail. "As it is possible, however, that, on account of his cousin's mental state, la Peyrade may refuse to agree to my plans, I have not thought it advisable to make the proposition directly to him. You have turned up on my way; you are smart and crafty, so I put this matrimonial negotiation in your charge. You may speak to him of a pretty girl with a good fortune, with one slight drawback, but mention no names."

"Your confidence honors me," replied Cérizet; "I will justify it to the best of my ability."

"Let us be under no illusion," replied du Portail. "A refusal would naturally be the first impulse of a man whose interests are engaged elsewhere; but we will not consider ourselves beaten. I do not readily give up my ideas when I believe they are just; and even if we are obliged to have la Peyrade shut up in Clichy, I am determined not to be balked in a plan for his happiness which I am sure he will regard as an inspiration. So, whatever happens, buy the acceptances from this M. Dutocq."

"At par?" asked Cérizet.

"Yes, at par, if you cannot do better. We shall not haggle over a few thousand francs, but when the affair is arranged Dutocq must give us his assistance. After what you have told me of the other marriage, you can scarcely waste any time," concluded du Portail.

"Two days hence I have an appointment with Théodose," said Cérizet. "We have some business to settle. Do you think it would be advisable to wait for this meeting, or shall I incidentally mention the proposition? In case of his refusal, that, it seems to me, would save our dignity."

"So be it," said du Portail; "that is not delaying much. Now, remember, monsieur, if you succeed, in place of having a man who might bring you to serious account for your imprudent connivance in the scheme of Madame Cardinal, you

will have one under obligation to you, ready to serve you in every way, and whose influence is greater than is generally realized."

After these agreeable words, the two separated with a good understanding, and mutually pleased.

Like the Tourniquet Saint-Jean, the Rocher de Cancale, since this scene is changed to, is to-day but a memory. A wine-dealer who uses a pewter-topped counter has replaced that *Temple of Taste,* that sanctuary of European fame, which had witnessed the gastronomic achievements of the Empire and the Restoration.

The evening of the day arranged upon for a meeting la Peyrade had received this simple word from Cérizet:

"To-morrow, lease or no lease, at the Rocher, at six thirty." As Cérizet saw Dutocq every day, he received his invitation by word of mouth; but his time was "quarter past six, sharp." It was evident that Cérizet wanted that fifteen minutes with him before the arrival of la Peyrade. That fifteen minutes the usurer intended to employ in jockeying Dutocq in the purchase of the acceptances; he thought a sudden proposition to purchase would be accepted more readily than if time were given for thinking; and the acceptances once secured below par, the man of the Rue des Poules would have time to consider if it would be safe to appropriate to himself the difference, or whether it would not be better to honorably account to du Portal for the bargain he had obtained. We may admit, however, that aside from the question of self-interest, Cérizet might have tried to overreach his friend. It was the instinct and need of his nature. He had the same horror of a straight line as the amateurs in English gardens have of a straight path.

Having still a portion of the price of his office to pay, and set down to a strict economy, Dutocq did not live so well but that a dinner at the *Rocher de Cancale* was an event in his life. He therefore showed a promptitude, which testified to the interest he took in this appointment, and at six and a quarter precisely he entered the stall of the restaurant where Cérizet already awaited him.

"It is very strange," said he. "Here we are in the same situation which inaugurated our business relations with la Peyrade, except that the meeting place of the three emperors is this time more comfortably chosen, and I prefer the Tilsitt of the Rue Montorgeuil to the Tilsitt of the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, Pilson's dismal restaurant."

"My faith!" replied Cérizet, "I don't quite know that the results justify the change, for, frankly, where are the profits of our triumvirate?"

"Well, but it was a bargain," said Dutocq, "with a long term attached. It can't be claimed that la Peyrade has lost much time, pardon the pun, in becoming installed at the *T(h)uileries*. The rascal has gone ahead pretty fast."

"Not so fast but that his marriage is anything but a settled matter," said Cérizet.

"Not settled; why?"

"Yes, I am charged to propose to him another wife. I am not so sure that he will be allowed to choose."

"But what, the devil! my dear, lending your hand to help on another marriage when you know we have a mortgage on the first!"

"My friend, one cannot always control circumstances. I saw that under the existing conditions, the plan we had arranged was going to pieces, and I have sought to secure something out of the new negotiations."

"Ah! they are fighting, then, for this Théodose. Who is this new party? Is she wealthy?"

"The dowry is very good,—much better than that of Mademoiselle Colleville."

"They can't fool me; la Peyrade signed the acceptances and he must pay them."

"The question is, will he pay them? You are not a merchant, neither is Théodose; suppose he disputes the acceptances; he might deny their validity. The tribunal might annul them as having been given without consideration received. Now you, as clerk to a justice, might find that the Chancellor could have a little case with you."

"Certainly, my dear fellow," said Dutocq, with the air of a man who sees himself confronted by an argument which he can not answer, "you have a mania for disturbing things and intermeddling."

"I tell you again that this matter came to me; and I saw at once that it was useless to struggle against the evil influence which was surrounding us, and I decided to save myself by a sacrifice."

"What kind of a sacrifice?"

"*Parbleu,* I have sold my share," said Cérizet.

"Who was the buyer?"

"Who, think you, would step into my shoes but those who had enough interest in urging on this other marriage to warrant them in restraining Théodose's liberty, if necessary?"

"Doubtless, then, my share would be of use also?"

"Well, you see, I could not offer it until I had seen you."

"Well, what do they offer?"

"*Dame,* my dear boy! that which I have myself accepted; knowing better than you the danger of their rivalry, I decided to accept hard conditions."

"But what are these conditions?"

"I let them have my acceptances for fifteen thousand francs."

"Oh! then your game is to make a commission out of mine to make up your loss—if you've had one—besides, it may be but a scheme between you and la Peyrade," said Dutocq, shrugging his shoulders.

"At least, my dear, you don't mince your words; you have an infamous thought and state it with charming abandon. Fortunately, you will soon hear me make my proposal to Théodose, and you can judge by his demeanor whether we are in collusion."

"Well, I withdraw the insinuation, as you say that you are going to make the offer to Théodose in my presence. But truly your backers are pirates. One does not bleed people in that manner. Another thing, I have not, like you, a fund upon which I can retire."

"See here, my poor friend, how I reasoned; I said to myself: 'This good Dutocq is being pressed for the last payment on his office; he will find enough to pay it off at one stroke; events have shown that uncertainties exist about the compromising of la Peyrade; here's cash down, on the nail.' The bargain ain't so bad, either."

"All the same, it's a loss of two-fifths."

"You just spoke of commissions. I foresee a means of getting one for you. If you will agree to fight this Colleville affair to the end, and take a rôle the exact opposite of that which you have hitherto played, I don't fear but what I can obtain you a round twenty thousand francs."

"Then you think this new proposal may not be acceptable to la Peyrade, that he will resist? Is it then some heiress from whom the rascal has already had something?"

"All that I can say is that for the result of the game we must wait the drawing."

"I ask nothing better than to draw in your sense, and to make myself disliked by la Peyrade. But five thousand francs! Think of it! It is too much to lose."

At this moment the door opened and the other guest arrived. "You may serve dinner," said Cérizet to the attendant; "we expect no one else."

They could see that Théodose had begun to take his flight toward higher social spheres; elegance had become his constant ambition. He had made an evening toilet, dress suit and patent-leather shoes, while the other two received him in loose coats and muddy boots.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I think I am somewhat late, but that devil of a Thuillier, with the pamphlet I am concocting for him, is one of the most intolerable of human beings. I was so unfortunate as to arrange to revise the proofs with him; at each paragraph we had a fight: 'What I don't understand,' he kept saying, 'the public can't understand, either. I'm not a man of letters, but I am a practical man;' and it was the same battle over every sentence. I thought this seance would never come to an end."

"What would you, my dear?" said Dutocq; "when a man wants to get there he must have some courage; once the marriage is made you can hold up your head."

"Oh! yes," said la Peyrade, "I'll raise it; for since you have given me this bread of bitterness, I've become heartily tired of it."

"Cérizet," said Dutocq, "has to-day some more succulent food to place before you."

For the time being nothing more was said; they had to do justice to the goodly cheer ordered for them by Cérizet, the prospective first tenant, and with reminiscences of happier times. As usual in these business dinners, where each one is preoccupied with the business which has brought them together, affecting, however, to be indifferent for fear of compromising his advantages or of appearing too eager, the conversation for some time was on general subjects. It was not until dessert was served that Cérizet decided to ask la Peyrade what resolution had been come to in reference to the lease.

"Nothing, my dear," replied la Peyrade.

"How, nothing? I left you time enough to decide in."

"And, in fact, something is decided; there will be no first tenant, Mademoiselle Brigitte will herself sub-let the house."

"That's a different story," said Cérizet, with a lordly air. "After your promise to me, I avow that I did not expect such a result as this."

"What could I do, my dear fellow? I made my promise subject to contingencies; I wasn't able to give another turn to the business. In her quality as master-woman and sample of perpetual motion, Mademoiselle Thuillier has reflected that she might as well undertake the task of managing the property and pocketing the profits herself that you intended making. I put in all I could about the annoyances, inconveniences, and so forth, but 'Bah! rubbish!' she replied; 'it will stir my blood and be good for my health.'"

"But this is pitiable," said Cérizet; "the poor old maid will not know where she is; she doesn't know what it means to get tenants from top to bottom."

"I used all those arguments," replied la Peyrade, "but only to strengthen her resolution. There you are, my dear democrats, you fomented the revolution of '89; you thought it an excellent speculation to dethrone the nobles by the bourgeoisie; it ends in yourselves being elbowed out. It seems like a paradox, but you've found out now that the peasant can't be forced down and kept under like the noble. The aristocracy had a care for its dignity; it prohibited itself a host of petty details, even of learning to write; it found itself dependent on a host of plebeian servitors to whom it confided three-fourth of the actions of their lives. That was the reign of the overseers, of intelligent and shrewd clerks, through whose hands passed all the interests of the great families, and who although undeserving of the despicable reputation given to them, still by the mere force of circumstances, enriched themselves from the parings of the splendid fortunes they administered. But to-day utilitarian theories rule: 'We are never so well served as by ourselves.' 'It's not disgraceful to know one's own business;' and a thousand other middle-class proverbs, which have done away with the need of intermediaries. Why should not Brigitte Thuillier have the right to manage her house, when dukes and peers of France go personally to the Bourse, when these same persons sign their own leases, and read them first, and discuss every point with the notary at his own place,—one whom they formerly contemptuously called a scrivener?"

During this tirade of la Peyrade, Cérizet had had time to recover from the staggering blow he had received, and skilfully turned the conversation to the other matter which he had undertaken to manage.

"What you have just been saying to us, my dear fellow," said he carelessly, "is very clever, but it seems to me to demonstrate clearly that we are not getting ahead, and that you are not on such a footing of intimacy with Mlle. Thuillier as you would have us believe. I begin to think that the marriage is far from being so settled a matter as Dutocq and myself fancied."

"Without doubt," replied la Peyrade, "there are yet some careful touches to be given to our sketch before it is finished, but I think it nears completion."

"For my part, I am of the contrary opinion; you have lost ground, and the reason is simple; you have done an immense service to these people, and they will never forgive you for it."

"Well, wait and see," said la Peyrade; "I hold them by more than one string."

"Not at all. You thought to do wonders by loading them with favors, and now they can do without you they will tread you under foot. The human heart, especially that of the middle classes, is constructed in that way. It is not because in this case I get the rebound of the blow which I feel you are going to receive. If I were in your place I should not consider myself on solid ground, and if some other opening presented itself——"

"What! because I couldn't get you the lease, must I throw the handle after the axe?"

"I repeat to you," said Cérizet, "that I'm not looking at it from the side of my own interests; but as you have doubtless and truly tried your very best to promote them, I think that the way in which you have been pushed aside is a disquieting symptom. It is this which leads me to speak of something which I should not otherwise have mentioned; for I believe that when one has an object in view, he should march straight to the point, looking neither before nor behind, or allowing himself to be diverted by any other aspiration."

"*Ah! ça!*" said la Peyrade, "what does all this talk amount to? Have you something to propose to me? What will it cost?"

"My dear fellow," replied Cérizet, ignoring this impertinence, "yourself shall judge of the value of finding a young woman, well brought up, adorned with beauty and talent, a dowry equivalent at the least to that of Céleste in her own right, *plus* one hundred thousand francs in diamonds (as Mlle. Georges says on her posters in the provinces), and—what

should especially attract an ambitious temperament—the disposal of a political position in favor of her husband."

"And this treasure you have in your hand?" asked la Peyrade, with an incredulous air.

"Better than that, I am authorized to make you the offer; I may even say that I am charged so to do."

"My friend, either you are mocking me, or, as I suppose, this phœnix has some prohibitory defect."

"I acknowledge," said Cérizet, "that there exists one slight defect, but not on the score of family, for to tell the truth, she has none."

"Ah!" said la Peyrade, "of course, a natural child—what besides?"

"Besides? Well, she is not so young as to wear the hood of St. Catherine; she is, say, about twenty-nine; but an elderly girl can be imagined into a young widow—nothing easier."

"And is that all the venom?"

"Yes, all that is irreparable."

"What do you mean by that? A case of rhinoplasty?"

This so pertinent word, as addressed to Cérizet, was given with an aggressive air; this manner, indeed, had been noticeable throughout the dinner, even in the conversation of the barrister. But it was not to the purpose of the negotiator to resent it.

"No," he responded; "we have as good a nose as feet and waist; but we might perhaps have a touch of hysteria."

"Very good!" said la Peyrade, "and as from hysteria to insanity there is but a step——"

"Well, yes," eagerly interrupted Cérizet; "sorrows have left our brain slightly deranged, but the doctors, after a careful diagnosis, say that after bearing a first child not the least trace of this trouble will remain."

"I willingly admit that Messieurs the Doctors are absolutely infallible," replied the barrister; "but, in spite of your discouragements, you must excuse me if I still continue to address Mademoiselle Colleville. It is perhaps ridiculous to

avow this, but the fact is that I am gradually falling in love with that little girl. It is not that she is very beautiful, or that the glamour of her dowry has enamored me, but in that child is an innocent mind joined to sound sense; and, what to my mind is of more consequence, she possesses a sincere and solid piety. I believe a husband will be happy with her."

"Yes," said Cérizet, who, having been on the stage, may well have remembered Molière's: "Your hymen shall be steeped in sweetness and joy."

This allusion to Tartuffe was keenly felt by la Peyrade, who hotly retorted:

"The contact of innocence will disinfect me of the vile company I have kept for so long a time."

"And you will pay your acceptances, which I urge you to do without delay," said Cérizet. "Dutocq here was just saying that he would like to see the color of your money."

"I? oh, not at all," said Dutocq; "I think, on the contrary, our friend is perfectly right in his delay."

"Well, for myself," said la Peyrade, "I am quite of Cérizet's opinion; I hold that the less the debt is honestly due, and therefore the more insecure, the sooner should one free himself by paying it."

"But, my dear la Peyrade," said Dutocq, "you speak very bitterly."

Drawing from his pocket a portfolio, la Peyrade said:

"Have you the acceptances with you, Dutocq?"

"Faith, no, dear fellow," said the clerk; "I don't carry them around; besides, they are in Cérizet's hands."

"Well," said the barrister, as he arose, "whenever you bring them to my office, the cash is ready. Cérizet can tell you something about that."

"What! are you leaving us without waiting for coffee?" said the usurer, much amazed.

"Yes; at eight o'clock I have an arbitration case. Besides, all has been said; you haven't got the lease, but you have gained your twenty-five thousand francs, and Dutocq can have his whenever he likes to present his acceptances at my office;

I don't see anything that should prevent me going about my own affairs, therefore I give you a cordial good-day."

"Dear me!" said Cérizet, as la Peyrade went out, "this means a rupture."

"And emphasized pointedly at that," remarked Dutocq. "With what an air he produced his portfolio!"

"But where the devil did he get his money?" asked the usurer.

"No doubt," replied the clerk, ironically, "whence he got that with which he paid off in full your acceptances on which you made such a sacrifice."

"My good Dutocq," said Cérizet, "I will explain to you the circumstances under which that insolent fellow got out of my clutches; and you shall see then that he actually stole fifteen thousand francs from me."

"Possibly; but you, my amiable clerk, wished to get ten thousand out of me."

"Not at all. I was very positively instructed to buy up your acceptances; you will recollect that I had risen to twenty thousand when he came in."

"All right, when we leave here we'll go to your house for those notes; I mean to give him the chance to pay me while his humor is hot."

"Quite correct; for I can tell you right here that there will very soon be an upset in his life."

"Then you were really serious about that crazy girl marrying him. I must say that in his place, with his affairs looking so promising, I should have adopted the same course; Ninas and Ophelias are very interesting on the stage, but in our households——"

"In the households, when they bring a dowry, we become their guardian," replied the sententious Cérizet. "Really we get a fortune and not a wife."

"Ah!" said Dutocq, "that is one way of looking at it."

"Let's have our coffee elsewhere," said Cérizet. "This dinner has ended so flatly that I want to get out of this room. I can't breathe in it." He rang for the waiter. "The bill?" said he.

"But, m'sieur, it is paid."

"Paid! and by whom?"

"By the gentleman who just left."

"But this is inconceivable," cried Cérizet. "I order the dinner, and you permit a stranger to pay for it!"

"I had nothing to do with it, m'sieur. This gentleman paid the lady at the desk. She must have believed that it was all understood. It is not so common to find people disputing the right to pay bills."

"Well, it's all right," said Cérizet, dismissing the boy.

"Won't the gentlemen have coffee," said the latter, "before leaving? It's paid for."

"An excellent reason for refusing it," answered Cérizet angrily. "It is really inconceivable that in a house like this such a blunder should be allowed. What do you think of such impertinence?" he bitterly added, when the waiter had gone.

"Pshaw! it's only a schoolboy's dodge to show that he has money in his pocket, which is something new to him."

"No, no, that's not it at all," said Cérizet, taking his hat; "it was his way of emphasizing the rupture. 'I will not even owe a dinner to you' is what he says."

"In fact, my dear fellow," said Dutocq, when they were going down stairs, "this dinner was given for the purpose of celebrating your instalment as principal tenant. He could not procure the lease for you, and I imagine his conscience troubled him at the idea of allowing you to pay for a dinner which, like my notes, would be an obligation without consideration."

Cérizet took no notice of this malicious explanation. They were in front of the desk presided over by the lady who had permitted the inopportune payment, and to preserve his dignity the money-lender felt obliged to say something.

Dutocq was the guide to a low café in the Passage du Saumon, where Cérizet soon recovered his good humor; like a fish who had been out of water returned to his native element, so Cérizet had become so degraded that he felt ill at ease in good society resorts. In this vulgar place a game of pool

was being played. Now Cérizet enjoyed the reputation in the establishment of being a skilful player, and he was entreated to take a cue. In the parlance of the place he "bought a ball"; that is, one of the players sold him his turn and score. Dutocq profited by this arrangement, to take himself off under pretence of going to inquire about a sick friend.

Soon after, in his shirt-sleeves, a pipe between his teeth, Cérizet made a masterly stroke which evoked tumults of applause. He looked triumphantly around, graciously receiving the admiration of the gods, when his eyes alighted on a terrible kill-joy. Standing amongst the spectators, looking over his hand resting on his cane, du Portail was watching him. Cérizet reddened, lost his presence of mind, made a few bad strokes, and was soon out of the game. As he was gloomily donning his coat du Portail brushed by him:

"Rue Montmartre, at the end of the court," said he in a low voice.

When they met Cérizet had the poor taste to try to explain why he was found in such disreputable company.

"But," said du Portail, "to see you there I had also to be there myself."

"That is true," replied the usurer; "I was astonished to find a quiet inhabitant of the St. Sulpice quarter there."

"That proves to you," retorted the other, in a tone which effectually cut off curious questioning, "that I am in the habit of going everywhere, and my lucky star usually leads me to those whom I wish to meet. I was thinking of you when you came in. Well, what have you done?"

"Nothing worth while. After playing me a trick deserving the gallows, and depriving me of a magnificent opening in business, our man rejected the overtures with the greatest disdain. There is no hope of buying up Dutocq's notes. La Peyrade seemed to have plenty of money, for he wished to take up his notes at once, and to-morrow morning certainly he will be free."

"Then does he regard his marriage with the demoiselle Colleville as a settled thing?"

"Not only that, but he pretended that it is a love-match. He tried to persuade me of that by a long, tiresome tirade."

"Very well," said du Portail, desiring to show that upon occasion he too could speak the jargon of the wine-shops, "*arrêtez les frais*"—"do not trouble yourself any further"—"I will take charge of the gentleman. Only come and see me to-morrow, and tell me about the family he proposes to enter. You have failed in one thing. Never mind. I shall have other matters for you."

As he spoke he hailed a passing hack, nodded to Cérizet, got in and told the man to drive to the Rue Honoré-Chevalier.

As he walked down the Rue Montmartre, to regain the Marrapade quarter, Cérizet puzzled his brain in guessing what that little old man, with curt speech, imperious manners, and tone that seemed to cast a spell as strong as a grappling-iron over a person, could be; why, too, should a man like him come such a distance to spend his evening, especially in such a place, where he must assuredly be out of his element? He had just reached the Market when he was rudely aroused from his meditation by a rough shake and a punch in his back. He turned hastily around, and found himself face to face with Mme. Cardinal. There was nothing surprising in this meeting, however, for she came to this neighborhood every morning to lay in her stock in trade.

Since the evening in the Rue Honoré-Chevalier, notwithstanding the clemency of which she had been the subject, the worthy woman had not thought it advisable to pay more than short visits to her own abode, and for two days she had drowned in the liquor shops called *débits de consolation* (licensed consolers) the grief of her discomfiture.

With thickened speech and face aflame:

"Well, papa," said she to Cérizet, "how did you come on with the little old man?"

"I gave him to understand in a few words," replied the money-lender, "that so far as I was concerned it was all a mistake. You, my poor Madame Cardinal, behaved in this affair with unpardonable heedlessness; why should you ask

me to assist you in getting your uncle's inheritance when it has for a long time been manifest that he had a natural daughter to whom he had left all by will? That little old man who interrupted you in your ridiculous attempt to secure an anticipated inheritance, is no other than the guardian of the heiress."

"Ah! so he is a guardian," said la Cardinal. "Nice people these guardians are! To talk as he did to a woman of my age, only because she wanted to find out if her uncle had anything to leave! And then to talk to me, me! of the police! It's horrible, it's *degustating!*"

"Come!" said Cérizet, "you shouldn't complain; you got off very well, Mammy Cardinal."

"Well, and you, you who broke the locks and said you would accept the diamonds under the pretence of marrying my daughter. As if she wanted you, my daughter, my legitimate daughter, as she is. 'Never, my mother,' said she to me; 'I will never give my heart to a man with half a nose, like his.'"

"So you've found her, then?"

"Only last evening; she has left her drunken actor, and is now, I flatter myself, in a splendid position, eating from silver, has a coach hired by the month, and is much esteemed by a barrister who would marry her off the reel, but he has to wait for the death of his parents; for his father happens to be mayor, and the government would be against it."

"My worthy woman," said Cérizet, "what the devil are you gabbling about? 'It happens that his father is his mother*——'"

"What stuff! Mayor of his arrondissement, the eleventh, Monsieur Minard, a retired cocoa-dealer, enormously rich."

"Oh! very good, I know him. And you say that Olympe is living with his son?"

"Well, that is to say, not living together, for that makes talk, although he visits her only with a good motive; he lives at home with his father, but he has bought their furniture and it is housed with my daughter in lodgings on the Chaussée-d'Antin; stylish quarter, ain't it?"

**Parce que le père se trouve être maire: mère*—mother; *maire*—mayor.

"That seems to me very well arranged," said Cérizet, "and since Heaven evidently had not destined us for each other——"

"Yes, that is how it stands; and I believe that this child will be a great comfort to me in the end. By the way, there is something I wish to consult you about."

"What is it?"

"It's this: since my daughter's in luck, I ought not to go on crying fish up and down the streets; and then I find myself disinherited by my uncle; it seems to me, therefore, that I've a right to a *elementary* allowance."

"You dream, my poor woman. Your daughter is a minor; it's you should be feeding her; she ought not to support you."

"Then," said Mme. Cardinal, becoming excited, "that means that those who have nothing must give to those who have plenty. That's a proper sort of a law; it's as bad as your guardians who prate about sending for the police. Well, yes, I'd like to see 'em send for the police! Let them guillotine me! It won't stop me saying that the rich are all swindlers; it's about time the people made another revolution for their *rightful rights,* my boy. You, my daughter, the barrister Minard, and that little old guardian, like you, you would all be done away with."

Seeing that his ex-mother-in-law had worked herself up to a degree of exaltation that was very annoying, Cérizet abruptly left her, but even then she sent her epithets after him for a hundred feet or more; but he promised himself the pleasure of getting even with her the next time she came to the bank in the Rue des Poules to ask for an "easy let down."

As he neared his house, Cérizet, who was anything but brave, felt an emotion of fear; he noticed a figure ambushed by his door which as he approached nearer moved out to meet him; happily it was none other than Dutocq. He had come for his acceptances. Cérizet returned them, with some ill-humor; he complained of the distrust implied by a visit at that untimely hour. Dutocq paid no attention to his touchy sus-

ceptibilities; and the next morning he presented himself to la Peyrade, who paid him to the last sou; and to some sentimental phrases which Dutocq uttered when he had the money in his pocket, he replied with marked coldness. Everything in his outward appearance resembled the attitude of a slave who has just broken his chains, and who does not propose to make any very Christian use of his liberty.

As he conducted his creditor to the door he found himself face to face with a woman dressed as a servant, who was just about to ring the bell. She seemed to be known to Dutocq, for he said:

"Ah! little mother; so you feel the necessity of consulting a barrister? You are right; at the family council some serious charges were brought against you."

"Thank God! I have no fear of any one; I can walk with my head erect," answered the woman.

"So much the better," said the justice's clerk, "so much the better; but you will probably soon be brought before the judge who has charge of the matter. However, you are in good hands, and our friend la Peyrade will give you the necessary advice."

"Monsieur is mistaken," replied the servant. "It is not for the reason he imagines that I have come to consult Monsieur Advocate."

"Well, be careful, my dear lady, for I tell you that when you get before the judge who is to inquire into the matter, you'll be finely pulled to pieces. The relatives are furious against you; they can't get the idea out of their heads that you have become very rich."

While speaking, Dutocq had his eye on Théodose, who avoided his gaze, and requested his client to enter.

This is what had taken place the day before between this woman and la Peyrade.

It will be remembered that la Peyrade was in the habit of attending the first mass in his parish church. For some time he had found himself the object of particular attention on the part of the woman who had just entered his house, and who,

as the saying goes, like Dorine in "Tartuffe," had taken care to attend regularly at "his exact hour"; these singular proceedings had embarrassed him considerably.

An affair of the heart? This explanation scarcely comported with the saintly maturity of a person wearing the plain cap, known in the quarter as a *janséniste,* the nun-like covering for the hair that distinguished the female votaries of that sect.

In other respects she was neatly, almost richly dressed, and on her neck she wore a gold cross suspended by a black velvet ribbon, which excluded the idea of a timid and hesitating mendicity which needed all this delay to embolden her to declare her errand.

On the morning of the day on which the dinner was to take place at the *Rocher de Cancale,* la Peyrade, tired of a mystery which had ended by becoming a matter of preoccupation to him, and seeing that this enigma in the round bonnet was disposed to speak to him, had gone to her, and asked her if she had any request to make of him.

"Monsieur," she replied in a mystical voice, "is I believe the celebrated Monsieur de la Peyrade, the advocate of the poor?"

"I am la Peyrade; and I have at times been able to be of service to the poor of this quarter."

Such was the hesitating modesty of the Provençal, who at this moment was not the type of his countrymen.

"If you would listen to and grant me a consultation, monsieur."

"This is not a fitting place," replied la Peyrade, "for a conference. It would seem that you have something important to say to me, for you have been hovering about me for some time. I live near here, Rue Saint-Dominique d'Enfer; if you will take the trouble to come to my office——"

"It will not trouble monsieur?"

"Not the least in the world; my business is to attend my clients."

"At what hour, for I would not disturb monsieur?"

"Whenever you please; I shall be home all the morning."

"Then I will hear another mass and take the communion; I am too agitated just now. I will be at monsieur's house at eight o'clock, if that hour won't be inconvenient."

"Not in the least," said la Peyrade; "and there is no need of so much ceremony," he added, with a shade of impatience.

Perhaps in this slight touch of ill-humor, there entered a little professional jealousy, for evidently he had to do with a combatant capable of giving him points.

At the hour named, not one minute before or past, the pious woman rang the bell, but the barrister had some difficulty in getting her to be seated and to state her case. Then that delaying little cough, so often used in like cases, seized her; but at last she touched the object of her visit.

"This is it," said she, "whether monsieur would be so kind as to let me know if it is true that a very charitable man has given a fund as a reward to servants who have faithfully served their masters?"

"There is this to say," replied la Peyrade, "that Monsieur de Montyon founded a prize of virtue which, in fact, has often been awarded to zealous and exemplary servants; but good conduct only is not enough, there must be some act of high devotion and a truly Christian abnegation."

"Religion," replied the pious woman, "enjoins humility, and so I cannot praise myself; but for twenty years I have been in the service of an old man, dull in the extreme, a *savant*, who has eaten up all his substance by inventing things, and whom I have been obliged to feed and clothe; so some people think I am not unworthy of obtaining the prize."

"That is, in fact, the condition under which the Academy chooses its candidates," replied la Peyrade. "What is your master's name?"

"He has no other name but Father Picot in our quarter, where he often appears dressed as if for a carnival, which attracts a crowd of children around him, who all cry out, 'Good-day, Father Picot! Good-day, Father Picot!' But he

has no consideration for his dignity. He is entirely lost in his own ideas; and it is useless for me to spoil my temper in cooking some nice bit for him, for if you were to ask him what he had for dinner he would not remember. He is a very [illegible]able man, however, and has turned out some very fine [illegible]pils. Monsieur may perhaps know young Phellion, a professor in the College Saint-Louis, who very often visits us."

"Is your master a mathematician?"

"Yes, monsieur; mathematics has ruined him. He has lost himself in a jumble of ideas, which seem to have no common sense, after having spoiled his eyesight in the observatory near by, where he was employed for years."

"Well," said la Peyrade, "let me have the testimony proving your devotion to this old man, and I will prepare a petition to the Academy and have it presented."

"Monsieur is very good," said the pious woman; "if he would allow me to speak of a little difficulty——"

"What is that?"

"They tell me, monsieur, that the prize can only be won by a very poor person."

"Not exactly so; still, the Academy does in effect try to choose people in straitened circumstances and who have made sacrifices beyond their means."

"Sacrifices! I flatter myself that I have made them; all my little heritage from my parents has gone in keeping him, and, besides, for fifteen years I had not a sou of wages, which, at three hundred francs a year and compound interest, would make a right pretty sum, as monsieur will allow."

At the words compound interest, which was evidence of a certain degree of cultured financial experience, la Peyrade looked upon this Antigone with more attention.

"In short," said he, "this difficulty of yours——"

"Monsieur," the pious one replied, "will not deem it objectionable that a very rich uncle of mine has died in England and left me twenty-five thousand francs; one, too, that had done nothing for his family before?"

"Assuredly there is nothing in that but what is right and properly legal," said the barrister.

"And yet, monsieur, I have thought that it might prejudice me in the eyes of the judges."

"Possibly; because as you are now in easy circumstances, the sacrifices you doubtless propose to continue might be considered less meritorious."

"Certainly I shall never abandon the poor man, in spite of his faults; and yet the small inheritance I have just received might be in great danger from him."

"How is that?" asked la Peyrade, curiously.

"Eh! monsieur, if he only got wind of that money, it would go at one mouthful; his invention of perpetual motion and the like has already ruined him and me."

"Then you would have the knowledge withheld from the Academy and master, both?"

"How clever monsieur is; he fully understands at once," said the religious woman, smiling.

"And what do you want to do with the money?" asked the barrister. "You want to get it out of your hands?"

"For fear that the master might swoop down upon it, certainly. How well monsieur understands; now, if it was at interest, I could get him a few delicacies now and again; that's why I should like it to bear interest."

"And as high as possible, eh?" said the barrister.

"*Dame!* yes, five or six per cent."

"Then it was about both these things that you wished to consult me?"

"Monsieur is so kind, so charitable, so encouraging."

"After a few inquiries the petition can easily be drawn; but to invest with security and secrecy, both, is rather more difficult."

"Ah! if I only dared," said she.

"What?" said la Peyrade.

"Monsieur understands me."

"I? not the least idea in the world."

"I have prayed well this hour past that monsieur might take charge of this money; I should be sure of its safety and of nothing being said about it."

La Peyrade received at this moment the fruit of his farce of devotion to the necessitous class. The chorus of porters' wives in the quarter, lauding him to the skies, had alone been able to inspire this domestic with such unbounded confidence in him. He thought of Dutocq, and firmly believed that this woman had been wafted to him by Providence.

But the more he longed to profit by this opportunity to secure his independence, the more need he felt of appearing to yield to the project against his will; and his objections were endless.

Indeed, he had no great faith in the character of his client, and did not care, as the proverb has it, to "rob Peter to pay Paul,"—to substitute for a creditor, who, after all, was his accomplice, a shrewd woman who might at any moment become exacting, and in her impatience to get back her money, make an outcry that would injure his reputation. He decided, therefore, to stake all on the game.

"My dear lady," said he to his pious client, "I am in no need of money; and I am not rich enough to pay you interest on twenty-five thousand francs without investing it. All I could do would be to put it, in my name, in the hands of the notary Dupuis, a pious man whom you may see every Sunday on the wardens' bench in our parish church. Notaries, you know, give no receipt; therefore I cannot give you one. I can but leave a note among my papers, which will be found at my death, showing the transaction. You see, it is a confidential business; it is only done to oblige a pious and devoted person who possesses charitable sentiments."

"If monsieur can find no other way——"

"That is the only one that seems possible," said la Peyrade. "However, I don't know but what I can get you six per cent, and I will see that the interest is paid promptly. Only it might be from six months to a year before the notary could repay the principle, because the funds which notaries usually place on mortgages are tied up for a longer or shorter time. Now, when you shall have gained the prize for virtue,—which I shall probably be able to obtain for you,—as you will no

longer need to hide the fact of your little fortune, although it may be for your interest to do so to-day,—I must warn you that in case of any indiscretion, your money will be at once returned to you, and I shall not hesitate to state openly the manner in which you hid your inheritance from the master for whom you professed the most absolute devotion. This, you perceive, would represent you as a hypocrite, and would greatly injure your reputation as a 'saint.'"

"Oh! monsieur, think you that I am a woman who would talk about what she should keep silent?"

"*Mon Dieu!* My dear lady, we must provide against everything in such a business. Money embroils the best of friends, and leads to results which one would least have foreseen. Take time to think it over. Come again in a day or two, I may evolve another plan; I confess this does not please me over-well; I may think of other difficulties that have escaped my notice."

This adroit menace thrown in clinched the business.

"I have reflected," said the devotee; "with a man so religious as yourself, monsieur, one can run no risk."

And, taking from the bosom of her dress a little pocket-book, she drew out twenty-five bank-bills. Her manner of counting them, the dexterity she showed, was to la Peyrade a revelation. The woman was well accustomed to handling money, and a singular idea struck him.

"Suppose that I am receiving stolen——No," said he; "in order to draw up your petition to the Academy I must make a few inquiries, so in the ordinary course of things I will wait on you presently. At what hour will you be alone?"

"On the stroke of four, monsieur goes for a promenade to the Luxembourg."

"And where do you live?"

"No. 9 Rue du Val-de-Grâce."

"Well, then, four o'clock; if, as I believe is likely, I find all is right, then I can take your money. Otherwise, if we give up the idea of getting your prize of virtue, you will have no further motive in concealing the fact of your inherit-

ance. Then you can invest it under more ordinary conditions than those I was obliged to propose to you."

"Oh! monsieur is prudent," said the devotee, who had thought the matter settled. "This money, thank God, I have not stolen, and monsieur can inquire about me in the quarter."

"That is just what I shall be compelled to do," said la Peyrade, dryly, for he did not quite like, under the exterior of simplicity, that lively intelligence which penetrated his every thought.

"Prizes for virtue are not given on hearsay; and without being a thief, one may not be a Sister of Charity. There is a wide range between the two extremes."

"As monsieur pleases," said the devotee; "you are doing me too great a service to complain of your precautions."

And, after an unctious salutation, she went out, carrying her money with her.

"The devil!" thought la Peyrade, "that woman is stronger than I am; she swallows an affront with a gratified air and without the shadow of a grimace. I have not yet acquired such control over myself."

He was afraid he had been too timorous, and thought that his client might change her mind before he saw her.

But the evil was done; and although somewhat disturbed lest he had allowed a good chance to escape him, he would have sacrificed a leg rather than yield to the temptation to foreshorten by a minute the time set for the interview.

The information he gathered in the quarter was contradictory: some gave his client the name of saint, others presented her as a very cunning, artful woman; but, summing all up, there was nothing that inculpated her morality such as would deter la Peyrade from accepting the good fortune that she offered him.

At four o'clock he found her of the same mind. The money in his pocket, he went to the *Rocher de Cancale*, and perhaps it was the day's excitement that had caused him to assume the petulant manner he had with his two associates. This ill-timed petulance did not harmonize with either his natural or

his acquired temperament. But the money burning in his pocket had somewhat upset him, and had produced an excitement and an eager desire for emancipation from his bonds which he could not control. He had thrown Cérizet overboard without even consulting Brigitte, and at the same time he had not the courage of his duplicity, for he had ascribed to the old maid a determination which emanated from his own will and from a bitter remembrance of his conflicts with the man who had so long domineered over him. Thus through the whole day la Peyrade had not shown himself the man so completely infallible as we had credited him with being. Once before, when he had in his possession the fifteen thousand francs given him by Thuillier, he had been enticed by Cérizet into an illegal proceeding which had resulted in the masterstroke of the Sauvaignou business. It is perhaps more difficult to keep one's head level in good than in evil fortune.

The Farnese Hercules, calm in repose, shows more fully the plenitude of muscular force than all the other Hercules represented in the excitement of their labors.

PART II.

Between the two parts of this story an important event had taken place in the life of Phellion.

Every one has heard of the ill-luck of the Odeon, that fatal theatre which had for years been the ruin of its directors. Rightly or wrongly the quarter in which stands this dramatic impossibility, is absolutely convinced that its prosperity in a high degree depends upon it; more than once the mayor and notables of the arrondissement have tried every desperate effort to galvanize the corpse, with a courage equal to their honor.

Now to have a finger in the pie theatrical is one of the eternal, ever-living ambitions of the middle class. Thus the successive saviours of the Odeon feel themselves amply rewarded when they are given a share, be it ever so small, in the administration of the concern. It was at such a combination of circumstances that Minard, in his quality as mayor of the eleventh arrondissement, had been called to preside over the committee on reading plays, with power to select as assessors a certain number of notables of the Latin quarter—the choice being left to him.

We shall soon know the exact condition of la Peyrade's project to acquire Céleste's dowry. Suffice it to say for the present, that this project, in approaching maturity, had been noised abroad; and as at this stage it seemed to shut out alike the chances of Minard the advocate and Félix the professor, the dislike manifested at one time by the elder Minard against old Phellion had been transformed unequivocally into a friendly disposition. Nothing soothes asperities and brings men together like a sentiment of common defeat.

Relieved from the evil demon of paternal rivalry, Phellion became in the eyes of Minard a Roman of the most incorruptible integrity, a man whose small treatises had been adopted

by the University,—which meant a sound and well trained mind. Thus when it became the duty of the mayor to select the *personnel* of the dramatic custom-house of which he was chief, he at once thought of Phellion. As to that grand citizen, on the day on which a place had been offered him in this august tribunal it seemed to him as if a crown of gold had been placed on his brow.

One can well understand that so high and sacred a mission was not lightly undertaken by a man of Phellion's solemnity; to himself he said that he was called upon to exercise magistracy, priesthood.

"To judge men," he had replied to Minard, who was astonished at his hesitation, "is an alarming task; but to judge of intellects—who can believe himself equal to such a mission?"

Once more the family, that reef of all noble resolutions, had endeavored to usurp control of his conscience, and the consideration of the boxes and admissions which the prospective member of the committee would have at his disposal, had excited such a ferment in his household that for a moment his freedom of action had been disturbed. Happily, however, Brutus had been able to decide on the course to which the vehement uproar of the whole Phellion tribe urged him. At the instance of Barniol, his son-in-law, seconded by his personal inspiration, he persuaded himself that by his votes, always given in favor of works of irreproachable morality, and by his firm determination to close the door to every representation to which the mother of a family could not bring her daughter, he had been called to render the most signal service to the cause of morality and public order.

Phellion, to use his own term, had become a member of the Areopagus presided over by Minard, and he had just come home from the exercise of his functions both "delicate and interesting,"—quoting himself again,—when the conversation we are about to repeat took place. As necessary to an understanding of the subsequent events of this history, and as bringing out in strong relief that envious instinct which is one of the

most salient features of the middle-class character, this conversation is indispensable at this point.

The session of the committee had been particularly stormy. In discussing a tragedy, having for title "The Death of Hercules," those classically imbued and the others tinctured with romance, carefully balanced by the mayor in forming the committee, had nearly come to the hair-pulling stage. Twice M. Phellion asked to put in a word, and every one was astounded at the flood of metaphors with which the speech of a major of the National Guard could flow when his literary convictions were assailed. The result of the vote was a victory for the opinions of which Phellion was the eloquent mouthpiece.

As they descended the stairs together Phellion remarked to Minard: "'The Death of Hercules' reminded me of the late Baron de Lancival's 'Death of Hector'; the piece we have just rehorsed sparkles with sublime lines."

"Yes," said Minard, "the versification is in good taste; there are many fine sentences; and I must avow, that I place this literature a little above Monsieur Colleville's anagrams."

"Oh!" said Phellion, "Colleville's anagrams are mere witticisms; they have nothing in common with the severe accents of Melpomene."

"And yet," replied Minard, "I can affirm that he attaches much importance to that stuff; and *à propos* of his anagrams, as well as *à propos* of many other things, *Monsieur le musicien* has become very much puffed up; and it seems to me that since their emigration into the Madeleine quarter, not only Colleville, but his wife, daughter, the Thuilliers, and the rest of the whole coterie have assumed airs of importance, very difficult to justify."

"What would you?" said Phellion; "it requires a strong head to stand the fumes of opulence. Our friends have grown very rich by the purchase of that house, which they have decided to occupy; we must excuse a little intoxication; yesterday they gave us a good house-warming dinner, well spread and succulent."

"I also," said Minard, "have, I flatter myself, given a few remarkable dinners at which men high in the government have not disdained to attend, but I am not unduly puffed up; and as I have always been, so I shall remain."

"You, Monsieur le Maire, have for a long time enjoyed a handsome mode of life in your high commercial capacity; on the other hand, our friends, recent passengers on the smiling bark of fortune, have hardly got their sea-legs yet."

To cut short a conversation in which Phellion found that the mayor was becoming too caustic, he was getting ready to take leave of him. To reach their respective houses they had to take different ways.

"Are you going through the Luxembourg?" asked Minard, not choosing to be so abruptly dismissed.

"I shall go that way, but not to stay. I have an appointment with Madame Phellion at the end of the broad walk; she will await me there with the Barniol children."

"Very well," said Minard, "I shall have the pleasure of saluting Madame Phellion, and at the same time taking a little fresh air; for even if we admire beautiful things the brain grows weary over such work as we have just been engaged in."

Minard quite realized that Phellion had not voluntarily followed him in his caustic remarks on the Thuilliers, so he did not offer to renew the subject, but he felt sure that Mme. Phellion would reëcho his animadversions.

"Well, fair lady," said he, "and what did you think of the dinner yesterday?"

"It was well put up," replied Mme. Phellion, "and the *potage à la bisque*.* I could tell, showed the hand of a master like Chevet, who must have replaced their own cook. But there seemed a lack of gayety; there was none of the cordiality that marks our little reunions in the Latin quarter. Besides, one could hardly fail to see that Madame and Mlle. Thuillier did not seem at home. I felt as if I were dining

* A rich soup.

with Madame——what er name? I cannot keep myself in mind of it."

"Torna, Comtesse de Godollo," said Phellion, interrupting. "Still the name is most euphonious."

"Euphonious as you wish, my friend; but for me, I can't think it's a name at all."

"It is a Magyar, or, vulgarly speaking, a Hungarian name. Our name, for instance, if one chooses to pick flaws in it, may be said to be borrowed from the Greek."

"That is possible, but we have the advantage of being well-known, not only in our own quarter, but in the whole world of education, where our parvenus have conquered an honorable position; not like that Hungarian countess who makes rain and sunshine in the Thuilliers' house. Whence came she? How comes it that having all the manners of a great lady,—for we cannot deny her that,—with such a distinguished air, she should fall into the arms of Brigitte, who, between us, tastes of the sod, and is the porter's daughter to a nauseating degree? I believe this devoted friend is an adventuress. She scents money there, and will manage later to get some of it."

"Dear me," said Minard, "don't you know how the intimacy began between the Comtesse de Godollo and the Thuilliers?"

"That she is a tenant of theirs, she occupies the entresol."

"True, but there's more than that in it. Zélie, my wife, had it from Joséphine, who was quitting their services for ours, but did not, as our own Françoise changed her mind about getting married. You must know, fair lady, that it was Madame de Godollo who caused the migration of the Thuilliers; she was, one might say, their upholsterer."

"How, their upholsterer!" cried Phellion, "that stylish woman of whom one might truly say: *Incessa patuit dea,* which, in French, is so imperfectly expressed by saying: 'the bearing of a queen.'"

"Pardon me," said Minard; "I don't mean she was actually their upholsterer, but when Mademoiselle Thuillier decided by la Peyrade's advice to manage the house herself,

this young gentleman, who has not such absolute control over her mind as he would have one believe, could not persuade her without strong inducements to move into that sumptuous apartment where they received us yesterday. Mademoiselle Brigitte objected that she would have to change her habits, that her friends would not follow her into such a distant quarter."

"It is certain," interrupted Madame Phellion, "that if we are to go to the expense of a carriage every Sunday, we must have some other pleasures in prospect than those we get in their drawing-room. When one thinks that except on the day of the party to favor Thuillier's election to the General Council they never had an idea of opening the piano!"

"Indeed," replied Minard, "it would be very agreeable to us to see such talents as yours occasionally called into requisition; but such ideas never occur to the mind of the good Brigitte. Hundred-sou pieces are her music.

"So when la Peyrade and Thuillier insisted upon quitting the residence in the Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer, she showed herself especially preoccupied with the expense the removal would entail. She judged wisely that in presence of the gilded decorations the old stuff of her former dwelling would have an odd effect."

"There you have the universal link," exclaimed Phellion; "you see, from the summit of society, luxury sooner or later infiltrates itself through the lower classes and involves empires in ruin."

"There you touch, my dear commandant, on a knotty point in political economy," said Minard. "Many intelligent men believe, on the other hand, that luxury is indispensable to the growth of commerce, which is certainly the life of the state. However, that point of view, which is not yours, would appear to be entertained by Madame de Godollo, for they say her own house is very daintily furnished, and to entice Mademoiselle Thuillier into the same path of elegance, she made the following proposal to her: 'One of my friends, a Russian princess, for whom one of the first upholsterers of Paris has

just completed a superb set of furniture, has been suddenly recalled by the Czar, a gentleman who is not to be trifled with. So the poor woman is under the necessity of turning all her possessions into ready money; and for a quarter of what the furniture cost her, I am sure she would dispose of it to any one who would pay her in ready money. All of it is nearly new, and there are many things which have not been used at all!"

"So," cried Madame Phellion, "all this magnificence displayed before our eyes last night, is but a cheap second-hand splendor."

"As you say, madame," replied Minard. "And what decided Mademoiselle Brigitte to accept this splendid chance was not so much a desire to renew her furniture as the thought of making a good bargain. You see, in this woman, there is always a touch of 'Madame la Ressource,' in *l'Avare*."

"I think, Monsieur the Mayor, that you are in error," said Phellion; "La Ressource is a character in 'Turcaret, a very immoral play by the late Le Sage."

"Do you think so?" said Minard. "Very possibly. Well, be that as it may, it is certain that if the advocate ingratiated himself with Brigitte by obtaining the house for her, it was the deal in the furniture that enabled the foreign countess to get on a good footing with Brigitte. You may have observed also the signs of a coming struggle between the two influences, the personal and the real estate?"

"Why, yes," said Mme. Phellion, with a beaming expression, evincing her interest in the conversation. "It did appear that the grand lady allowed herself to contradict the barrister, and with an amount of asperity, too."

"Oh, it was very marked, and the intriguer perceived it very clearly. Also he appeared much disturbed over the hostility. He captured the Thuilliers very readily, for between you and me, they are not very strong; but he feels that he has found a shrewd adversary, and is anxiously looking for some means to control her."

"On my faith, that is just. For some time this gentleman, who was formerly so humble, has put on such a domineering

air in the house that he has become intolerable. He mounts the high horse, and in fact, in the matter of Thuillier's election he made use of us all as stepping-stones to his matrimonial ambition

"Yes," said Minard, "but the hour is close at hand when he will bite the dust. Moreover, he will not find the opportunity every day to buy for his 'good friend,' as he calls Thuillier, an estate worth a million for a bit of bread."

"They got this house, then, at a good bargain?" asked Madame Phellion.

"For almost nothing, the result of a contemptible intrigue, the whole story of which Desroches related to me the other day; and which, if the affair were known to the council of his order, might seriously compromise the advocate. Then we have the prospective election to the Chamber. Monsieur Thuillier's appetite grows by eating. But he already feels that when the time comes to cut this loaf, Monsieur Peyrade will not be able to make dupes of us so easily. This is why they have turned to Madame de Godollo, who seems to have some influential friends in the political world. However, without speaking of this interest, which is still in the future, every day the Countess of Godollo renders herself more necessary to Brigitte, for it is beyond dispute that but for the assistance of the great lady, the poor woman in her gilded drawing-room would resemble a rag in the trousseau of a young bride."

"Oh, Monsieur the Mayor, you are cruel," said Madame Phellion with a simper.

"No! but really," replied Minard, with his hand on his conscience, "could Brigitte or Madame Thuillier be able to maintain a salon? The Hungarian presides over all the arrangements of the apartments. She procured the male domestic whose good appearance and intelligence you may have noticed; she drew up the *menu* for the dinner yesterday; in short, she is the good Providence of the colony, which but for her would be the laughing-stock of the whole quarter.

"There is this further: Instead of being as you thought at

parasite, like the Provençal, this foreigner has a fortune own which she uses beneficently. She it was who gave o dresses of Brigitte's and Madame Thuillier's; she herself to arrange the toilettes of our *amphitryonesses*, accounts for them not being found in their usual fashion."

But what accounts for such a maternal and devoted patron- said Madame Phellion.

My dear friend," said Phellion solemnly, "human actions always, thank God! founded on fickle egotism, or con- tions of mean self-interest. There are still hearts who pleasure in doing good for its own sake. This lady has our friends stumble in their path towards a sphere whose they had not measured; and having encouraged their eps by the purchase of this furniture, like a nurse at- d to her foster-child, she takes pleasure in lavishing upon the milk of her knowledge and her advice."

our dear husband," said Minard to Madame Phellion, d appear not to touch the matter, and yet he goes beyond "

I go beyond you all!" said Phellion, "that is not my in- on; neither is it in accordance with my habits."

It seems to me, however, that it would be difficult to say clearly that the Thuilliers are simpletons, and that Ma- de Godollo has taken upon herself to bring them up ding-strings."

do not accept for our friends," said Phellion, "the tory remarks you make about them. I merely wish to that there may be a lack of experience, and the noble lady ced at their service her knowledge of society and ges; and I protest against any interpretation of my ch goes beyond their legitimate meaning."

will admit, however, my dear commandant, that the ing Céleste to la Peyrade, is something beyond a norance of the usages of society. It is at the same and immorality; for, really, the scandalous on of that barrister with Madame Colleville——"

"Monsieur le Maire," interrupted Phellion, with redoubled solemnity, "the law-giver, Solon, decreed no punishment for parricide, declaring it an impossible crime. I think the same may be said of the gross misconduct to which you allude. Madame Colleville granting favors to Monsieur la Peyrade and the while intending to give him her daughter is—no, monsieur, no! it is beyond imagination. Questioned on this subject before the Tribunal, Madame Colleville, like Marie Antoinette, might respond: 'I appeal to all mothers.' "

"Nevertheless, my friend, allow me to remind you that Madame Colleville is abominably profligate, and has given very sure proof of it."

"That's enough, my dear," said Phellion. "The dinner hour calls us; I fear we have allowed our conversation to drift toward the miry banks of slander."

"You are full of illusions, my dear commandant," said Minard, giving his hand to Phellion, "but they are honorable [illegible]usions, and I envy you them.—Madame, I have the honor—" [illegible]led the mayor, respectfully saluting Madame Phellion.

[illegible]nd they went their ways.

[illegible]e information imparted by the mayor of the eleventh [illegible]dissement was correct. In the Thuillier salon, since [illegible]had emigrated to the quarter de la Madeleine, there had [illegible]en the acrid Brigitte and the plaintive Madame [illegible]e figure of a seductive and graceful woman which [illegible] to th[illegible] salon an air of unexpected refinement.

[illegible], that through the mediation of this woman, who be[illegible] her tenant, Brigitte had made a bargain in furni[illegible]s advantageous, but much more creditable, than [illegible]on of the famous landed property. For six thou[illegible]es she had acquired a set of furniture nearly fresh [illegible] dealer's, which was worth at least thirty thousand [illegible]rai[illegible].

It was also true that as the consequence of a service which went to the heart of the old maid, she had manifested for the beautiful stranger much of that respectful deference which the middle class, notwithstanding its distrustful rivalry, pays,

much more than is generally admitted, to noble titles and elevated position in the social hierarchy.

As this Hungarian countess was a woman of great tact and thorough education, when she assumed over her protégés the supreme control she considered it advisable to exercise, she at the same time was careful not to give her authority the air of a vexatious, imperious pedagoguism. On the contrary, flattering Brigitte's pretensions to being a model housekeeper, in all her own household expenses she affected to take the advice of *Miss* Brigitte—the pet name she had chosen to give her—so that, while reserving in her own and her neighbors' apartments, the charge of the more luxurious expenses, she had rather the air of imparting and receiving information than of exercising a dominant control.

It was impossible that la Peyrade should not be aware that a change was taking place in the Thuillier household. His influence was fast waning before that of the stranger; but the Countess did not limit herself to a simple struggle for influence; she made no pretence of being otherwise than utterly opposed to his suit for Céleste's hand; more, she gave her approval to the love of Félix Phellion; and Minard, who was aware of this, had been careful in all the other pieces of information of which he had been so lavish, not to mention this to those interested.

La Peyrade was perhaps more distressed at feeling himself undermined by a hostility inexplicable to him from the fact that he had only himself to blame for introducing this disturbing element into the heart of the citadel.

His first mistake was the barren satisfaction of refusing the loan to Cérizet. If Brigitte had not taken the matter into her own hands, by his advice, it was unlikely that she would have become known to Madame de Godollo.

Another blunder was in persuading the Thuilliers to leave the Latin quarter. At that time Théodose was in the full flower of his credit with them, and looked upon his marriage as a settled thing. He manifested an almost childish haste to push forward towards the elegant sphere upon which

his future seemed opening. He therefore supported the views of the Hungarian in the sale of the furniture and in having her installed as a tenant; he felt that he thus sent the Thuilliers before him to make ready his bed in the splendid suite he intended sharing with them.

In this arrangement he had seen another advantage, that of removing Céleste from almost all intercourse with a rival whom he could but consider dangerous. Deprived of the facility of an almost "door-to-door" proximity, Félix would be forced to lessen the frequency of his visits, and it would be easier to oust him from the heart in which he had been installed only upon condition of giving the religious assurances to which he showed himself so refractory.

But to all these schemes of the Provençal more than one obstacle had intervened.

If la Peyrade should enlarge the horizon of the Thuilliers, he ran the risk of creating rivals to that exclusive admiration of which he had hitherto been the object.

In the species of provincial atmosphere in which they lived, in default of means of comparison, Brigitte and the *bon ami* had placed him on a pedestal, from which the presence of other superior and elegant persons might cause him to descend. Aside from the blows which had been stealthily dealt him by Madame de Godollo, the plan of the transpontine colonization was a bad one as far as the Thuilliers were concerned, and was not much better in relation to the Colleville's. The latter had followed their friends into the house in the Madeleine, where the rear entresol had been conceded to them at a price conformable to their means. But Colleville found that it lacked light and air, and, obliged to go daily from the Madeleine boulevard to the St. Jacques faubourg, where his office was situated, he railed against the arrangement of which he was the victim, and at times rated la Peyrade as a tyrant. On the other hand, Mme. Colleville, under the pretence of being a resident in such an aristocratic quarter, had rushed into a frightful orgy of new bonnets, mantles, and dresses, which necessitated the presentation of a pile of bills and caused frequent stormy scenes in the household.

As to Céleste, she had doubtless fewer opportunities of seeing young Phellion, but she had also fewer chances of engaging in theological discussions with him, and absence, which is dangerous only to weak attachments, caused her to think more worldly and less theologically of the man of her dreams.

But all this was as nothing when weighed with another cause for his diminished influence. He had promised Thuillier that the Cross should be his within a week, and by the expenditure of ten thousand francs, to which the latter had consented himself with a very good grace. He already saw himself in possession of the object which had been the secret longing of his whole life. Two months had elapsed since then, and yet no sign was there of that glorious bauble; and the old schoolchief, who would have been so happy to display his red ribbon on the promenade of the Boulevard de la Madeleine, where he had become one of the most assiduous visitors, could not decorate his buttonhole with a simple flower, a privilege of any one, and of which he was much less proud than *our* Béranger. To be sure, la Peyrade had mentioned an unforeseen and unaccountable obstacle which had paralyzed every effort of the Comtesse du Bruel; but Thuillier was sick of being paid in explanations, and on some days when his disappointment was particularly acute, he would often, like *Chicaneau* in "Les Plaideurs," be within an ace of saying: "Then give me back my cash!" However, there was no open rupture, for la Peyrade had still a hold over him, in the matter of the pamphlet, "Taxation and Redemption," the completion of which had been suspended by the uproar of removal. During this exciting time Thuillier had not been able to give his attention to revising the proofs, on which, it will be remembered, he had reserved the right of a minute examination.

La Peyrade felt that he had reached a point at which he must strike a blow in order to restore his rapidly evaporating influence. It was just that higgling disposition that afforded the barrister a chance to use a scheme both bold and deep.

One day, when they were at work on the last pages of the pamphlet, a discussion arose over the word "nepotism," which

Thuillier would have eliminated from one of the sentences written by la Peyrade, declaring that he had never met with it, and that, properly, it was "neologism," which, in the literary ideas of the bourgeoisie, is about equivalent to the notion of '93 and the Reign of Terror.

Generally, la Peyrade took the ridiculous notions of his "dear friend" in good part; but this day he became highly excited; he signified that Thuillier might finish the work himself, as he was able to criticise so intelligently, and for some days he was not seen again.

Thuillier at first laid it to a mere passing effect of ill-humor, but la Peyrade's prolonged absence made him feel the necessity of taking a conciliatory step; so he went to the Provençal's room to apologize, and seek to put an end to this sulkiness. Wishing at the same time to conduct himself in a manner which would allow him to retain his self-respect, he said:

"Well, my dear fellow, I find we were both right; *nepotism* means the authority that the nephews of popes take in affairs political. I have searched the dictionary, and I find no other explanation; but, from what Phillion says, it appears that in the vocabulary of politics the word has been extended to cover the influence which corrupt ministers allow certain persons to illegally exercise; I think, therefore, that we can let the term stand; at the same time, it is not so used by Napoleon Landais."

La Peyrade, who, while receiving his visitor, had pretended to be exceedingly busy in arranging his papers, contented himself with shrugging his shoulders, but made no answer.

"Well," went on Thuillier, "have you looked over the proofs of the last two sheets? For we ought to be getting along."

"If you have sent nothing to the printers," replied la Peyrade, "we are not very likely to have proofs; for my own part, I have not touched the manuscript."

"But, my dear Théodose," said Thuillier, "it cannot be possible that you are vexed about such a trifle. I don't pretend to be a writer; but, as I sign the thing, it seems I might have my opinion about a word."

"But *Mósieu* Phellion," replied the barrister, "is a writer; and, as you have consulted him, I don't see why you shouldn't engage him to finish the work; as for myself, I promise you I won't coöperate any more."

"*Dieu!* what a temper!" exclaimed Brigitte's brother; "here you are furious just because I doubt an expression and consulted some one else. You know very well that I read some of the passages to Phellion, to Colleville, to Minard, and to Barnol, as if the work were my own, to observe the effect it might have on the public; but that is no reason why I should subscribe to anything they might be capable of writing. Shall I give you an idea of the confidence I have in you? The Comtesse de Godollo, to whom last evening I read a few pages, told me that the pamphlet was apt to cause me trouble with the public prosecutor; can you for a moment think anything like that would stop me?"

"Well," said la Peyrade, ironically, "I think that the oracle of your house sees the thing clearly; I have no desire to bring your head to the scaffold."

"That's all nonsense. Do you or do you not intend to leave me in the lurch?"

"Literary questions," replied the barrister, "breed quarrels among the best of friends; I wish to put an end to such discussions between us."

"But, my dear Théodose, I have never claimed to be a literary man. I believe I have a share of common sense, and I can give expression to my opinions. You would not deny me that privilege; and certainly, if you do me such an ill turn as to refuse me your assistance it is because you have some grievance against me of which I am ignorant."

"Where is the ill turn? There is nothing so easy for you as not to publish a pamphlet. You will be Jérôme Thuillier just the same."

"It seems to me, however, yourself being the judge, that this publication might aid in my future election; and then, I repeat, I have read passages to all our friends; I have announced the thing in the Municipal Council; and now, if the

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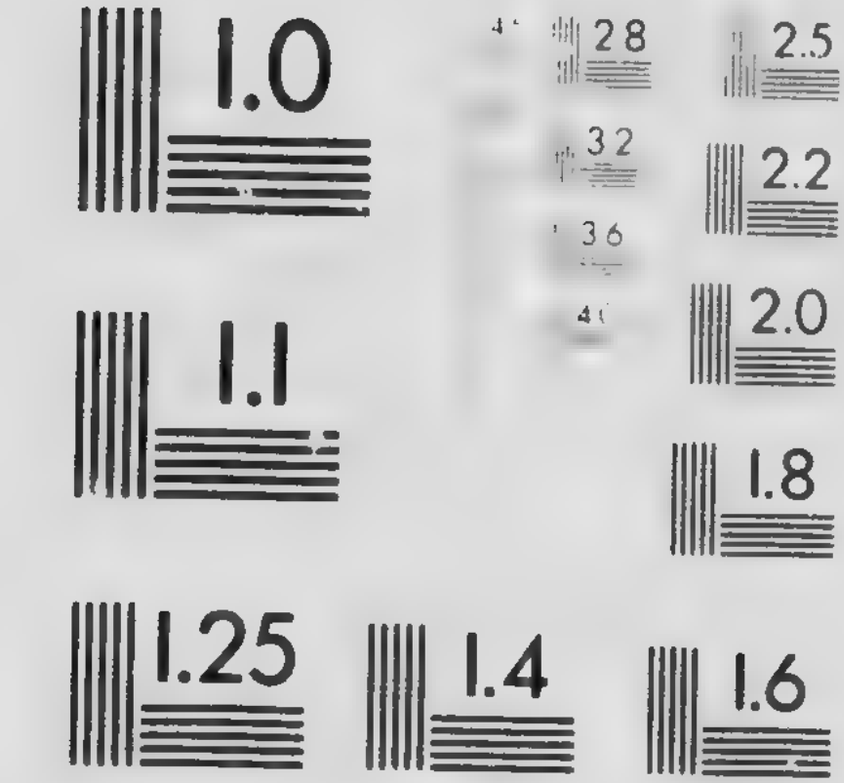

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work does not appear, I shall be dishonored. It will be s that the government has bought me."

"You have only to say that you are the friend of the inc ruptible Phellion; that will be an answer to everybody. Y can even give Céleste to his booby of a son. Such an allian will shield you still better against all suspicion."

"Théodose," said Thuillier, "you have something on yo mind that you don't tell me; it is unnatural that for a simp tiff about a word you should wish to lose a friend as influenti as myself."

"Well, then," said la Peyrade, with an air of decision, " don't like ingratitude."

"Nor do I like it any more than you," said Thuillier wit some heat, "and if you think of accusing me of aught so ba and vile, I demand an explanation. It is time to stop equiv cating. Of what do you complain? What reproach can yo have against one whom only the other day you called you friend?"

"Nothing and everything," said la Peyrade; "your siste and yourself are too clever to break openly with a man wh at the risk of his reputation, has put a million in your hands but, all the same, I am not so simple but that I can detect change. There are people about who set themselves to un dermine me; and Brigitte has but one thought, and that i how to find a reasonable pretext of not keeping her promises Men such as I am do not urge such claims, and I have certainly no intention of imposing myself upon anybody; but I confess that I was far from expecting such treatment."

"Come, come," said Thuillier, seeing a tear in the barrister's eye, by the glitter of which he was completely duped, "I don't know what Brigitte may have done, but one thing is quite certain, that I have never ceased to be your most devoted friend."

"No," said la Peyrade. "Since my delay in getting you the Cross, I am only fit to be thrown to the dogs, as they say. Can I struggle against secret influences? *Mon Dieu!* Perhaps this pamphlet of which you have spoken too freely, and which

has disturbed the government, has been an obstacle to your nomination. These ministers are so stupid that they would rather have their hand forced by the fame of the publication, than to give you the Cross with a good grace, simply as a reward for your services. But these are the mysteries of politics, which your sister knows nothing about."

"What the devil!" said Thuillier. "I consider myself a pretty close observer, and I do not see that Brigitte has changed toward you."

"It is true," said la Peyrade; "you are so sharp-sighted that you do not always see Madame de Godollo alongside Brigitte; she seems now that she cannot live without her."

"Oh, ho! it is perhaps a little jealousy on our mind!" said Thuillier slyly.

"Jealousy!" answered la Peyrade. "I don't know whether that's the proper word; but anyhow your sister, who is not at all above the ordinary, and whom I am astonished that a man of your intellectual superiority should allow to assume a supremacy which she uses and abuses——"

"How can I help it, dear fellow?" interrupted Thuillier, sucking in the compliment; "she is so entirely devoted to me."

"I acknowledge the weakness," replied la Peyrade; "but, I repeat it, your sister is altogether inferior to you. And what I say is that when a man of the value which you claim to recognize in me does her the honor of advising her, and who devotes himself to her as I have done, it cannot be agreeable to him to see himself supplanted by a woman come from no one knows where, and all on account of some trumpery curtains and a few old chairs she has helped her to purchase."

"With women, as you well know, household affairs come before all else," replied Thuillier.

"Another thing I can tell you, Brigitte, who has a finger in everything, has an equal pretension to use a high hand in our affairs; you, being so remarkably clear-sighted, must have seen that to Brigitte nothing is less certain than my marriage with Mademoiselle Colleville notwithstanding my love has been solemnly authorized by you."

"Well," said Thuillier, "I should like to see any one dare to interfere with my arrangements."

"To say nothing of Brigitte," replied the advocate, "there is some one else occupied in disarranging our plans, and that is Mademoiselle Céleste herself. In spite of the bickerings about religion, her mind is not the less filled with that little Phellion."

"But why not have Flavie put a stop to it?"

"Flavie, my dear! no one knows her so thoroughly as you. She is a woman before being a mother; I have found it necessary to do a little courting in that quarter myself; and you understand that, though she may will the marriage, she would not urge it very much."

"Well," said Thuillier, "leave that matter to me; I'll speak to Céleste; I won't have a chit of a girl laying down the law for me."

"That's just what I don't wish you to do," exclaimed la Peyrade; "don't interfere in this at all. Outside of your relations with your sister you have an iron will; it shall never be said that I took advantage of your authority over Céleste to have her placed in my arms; on the contrary, I wish her to have full control of the disposition of her heart; only I think that she should be required to definitely decide between myself and Monsieur Félix, for I don't want to remain in this position, which is distracting me. The postponement of this marriage until you are elected deputy is a dream. It is impossible for me to consent that the greatest event of my life shall be left to the chances of the future; and besides, that arrangement to which we at first agreed has a flavor of the market which is not agreeable to me. I ought, moreover, my dear sir, to confide to you something to which I am impelled by all the difficulties which surround me. Dutocq can inform you that before leaving the apartments in the Rue Saint-Dominique an heiress was offered me who has a larger fortune than Mademoiselle Colleville. I refused that because I foolishly let my heart be won, and because an alliance with a family as honorable as your own seemed the more to be de-

red; but, after all, it might be as well to let Brigitte understand that, in case Céleste should refuse me, I shall not be pushed into the street."

"I can easily believe that," said Thuillier; "but as for putting all the decision of this affair at the mercy of that girl's head, and if, as you say, she has a fancy for that Félix——"

"I am indifferent to that," said the barrister; "but I cannot remain any longer in my present position. It is intolerable to me. You talk about your pamphlet, I am in no fit condition to finish it; you are a ladies' man and can understand the fascination that those creatures fatally exercise over our minds."

"Pshaw!" said Thuillier, conceitedly, "they took to me, but I didn't often care for them; I just took them and left them."

"Yes, but I, with my Southern nature, am passionate; and then Céleste has other attractions besides fortune. Brought up by yourself, under your own eyes, you have made her an adorable child; only it was a great weakness to allow that boy, who is not in any degree suited to her, to install himself in her fancy."

"You are right ten times over; but it was first a childish fancy. Félix and she played together; you came much later, and it proves our high regard for you that when you presented yourself we renounced our former projects."

"You, yes," said la Peyrade. "With a head filled with lit-[illegible] ideas, which are marked with bright wit and full of intelligence, you have a heart of gold. With you the relations are sure, and you know what you want. But when you speak to Brigitte of hastening the time for the marriage, you will find how bitterly she will oppose the arrangement."

"Well, I think that Brigitte has always wished and still wishes to have you for a son-in-law, if I may so speak. But whether she wishes it or not, pray believe that in important matters I am master of my own will. Only state exactly what you desire, then we will start off at a rapid pace, and you will see that everything will go well."

"I think I will finish your pamphlet, for, before all else, think of you."

"Certainly," said Thuillier, "we ought not to sink in port

"Well, then, start from the idea that I am overwhelme stupefied by the prospect of this marriage being frustrate do you see? You will not get a page from me until th question is settled one way or the other."

"Put your desires in definite terms," said Thuillier.

"Naturally, if Céleste's decision goes against me, I wish t know it at once. If it is my fate to make a marriage of con venience, at least I do not want to let slip the chance of whic I have spoken to you."

"Be it so; but how long a respite will you give us?"

"It seems to me that a girl should be able to make up he mind in a fortnight."

"Without a doubt," replied Thuillier; "but I have the great est repugnance in allowing Céleste to decide without appeal."

"I accept the chances. I will at least be relieved from this uncertainty, which is the main point; and between you and me, I am not taking such a risk as I appear to. It is not in a fortnight that a son of Phellion, who is, one may say, obstinacy incarnate in silliness, will make an end of his philosophical hesitations, and certainly Céleste will never accept him for her husband until he gives her proof of his conversion."

"That is probable. But if Céleste dawdles over the matter: suppose she won't accept the alternative?"

"You will have to look after that," said the Provençal. "I don't know how you manage families in Paris, but in our country of Avignon it would be without parallel that a young woman should be given such liberty. If you, your sister (supposing that she is acting fairly), a father, and a mother cannot succeed in making a child, whose dowry you are to furnish, declare her mind in a matter so simple and so reasonable as to decide between two suitors,—well the sooner you write over the door of the house that Céleste is queen and sovereign the better."

"We've not come to that yet," said Thuillier, with a firm manner.

"As for you, my old boy," replied la Peyrade, "I must put you off until after Céleste has decided. Then, whatever may be my fortune, I will go to work, and in three days your pamphlet will be ready."

"Well," replied Thuillier, "now that I know what is in your mind, I will go and talk with Brigitte."

"Your conclusion is a sorry one," said la Peyrade; "but, unfortunately, it can't be helped."

"What do you mean?"

"I should prefer, you can readily imagine, to hear you say that the matter is settled; but old habits cannot easily be broken."

"Ah! you think I am a man without will, unable to act for myself?"

"No; but I should like to be in a corner, to see how you will broach the subject to your sister."

"I'll open it frankly with Brigitte, and *I will* not have any objections."

"Ah! my poor fellow," said la Peyrade, clapping him on the shoulder, "since *Chrysale*, in 'Femmes Savantes,' who has not continually seen many brave warriors who have struck their flags before the powerful will of women used to domineer?"

"We'll see about that," said Thuillier, making a theatrical exit.

This eagerness to see his pamphlet finished, and the doubt skillfully thrown over the inflexibility of his will, had made him as furious as a tiger; and he went out in a mood to visit his whole household with fire and blood if he were resisted.

When he returned home Thuillier at once put the question before Brigitte. She, with her native wit, good sense, and egotism, pointed out that by thus hurrying on the previous arrangements for the marriage they were disarming themselves; they could not say when the election occurred whether the barrister would be as energetic for success. "It might be," said the old maid, "the same as with the Cross."

"There's a difference," replied Thuillier; "the Cross d not depend directly on la Peyrade, but his influence in arrondissement he employs as he wills."

"And if he wills," retorted Brigitte, "after we have feat ered his nest, to work on his own account? He's very am bitious."

This danger did not fail to strike the future candidate, wh nevertheless thought he might depend upon the honor of Peyrade.

"It is not a particularly delicate honor," replied Brigitt "when a man tries to get out of a bargain he made, and h idea of dangling a lump of sugar before us about getting 'you pamphlet finished doesn't please me at all. Couldn't Phellio help you? Or, I think, Madame de Godollo, who is we known in political circles, could hire you a journalist; the are plenty of such down at the heel; you could get the whol thing done for a twenty-crown piece."

"And the secret," replied Thuillier, "would then be in th possession of two or three people. No! I must have la Pey rade. He knows it, and he can impose his own terms. Be sides, after all, we promised him Céleste, it is only fulfillin the promise a little earlier; the King, of course, may dissolv the Chamber at any moment."

"But if Céleste won't have him?" objected Brigitte.

"She must do as we wish. We ought to have thought o this when we made the agreement with la Peyrade, for we h given our word. Besides, Céleste is allowed to choose bet him and Phellion."

"So you really believe," said the skeptical Mlle. Thuilli "that should Céleste decide in favor of Félix, you can st count on la Peyrade's devotion?"

"What else can I do? Those are his conditions. Beside he has made calculations of the whole business, he knows th Félix will not so soon decide to bring Céleste a certificate of confession, and if he does not do this that little witch will not accept him for her husband. La Peyrade plays a clever game."

"Too clever," said Brigitte; "I won't interfere; settle it as you please; all this scheming is not to my taste."

Thuillier saw Mme. Colleville, and intimated to her that Céleste must be informed of the projects about her.

When informed that she must choose between Félix and la Peyrade, the naïve child was only struck by the advantage of one of the alternatives offered; she thought she had gained a point by consenting to an arrangement which made herself the mistress of disposing of her person and to bestow her heart as she wished. But la Peyrade had not miscalculated when he reckoned that the religious intolerance on one part and on the other side the philosophical inflexibility of Phellion would create an invincible obstacle to their coming together.

Céleste had never been officially authorized to bestow her affections upon Félix. On the contrary, on a previous occasion Flavie had expressly forbidden her to hold out any hope to the young professor; but she felt herself supported by Madame Thuillier, her godmother, to whom alone she had given her confidence, and gently yielded to her inclinations without giving herself much anxiety as to the obstacles which might intervene to thwart her choice.

The evening of the same day when Flavie had been instructed to communicate to Céleste the sovereign will of the Thuilliers, the Phellions came to pass their evening with Brigitte, and a sharp engagement took place between the young people. Mademoiselle Colleville did not need the warning advice given by her mother, that it would be very unbecoming for her to allow herself to mention to Félix the conditional approval of his suit. Céleste had too much delicacy of feeling and too much religious ardor to desire the conversion of her lover on any other terms than his own conviction. Their meeting was spent entirely in theological debates; and love is so strange a Proteus, and can take such unexpected shapes, that even when clothed in a black robe and square hat, he was not so unattractive as one might imagine; but Phellion junior was in the encounter more than usually unlucky and blundering. He would concede nothing; he took on an air of airy

and ironical importance, and ended by fairly putting Céle-
beside herself; she made a definite rupture with him, and f
bade him appearing in her presence for the future.

Had the young savant been a more experienced lover
would have called on Céleste the very next day; for hear
never approach so near to an understanding as when th
have declared the necessity for an eternal separation. But th
law is not a rule of logarithms, and Félix Phellion, incapab
of guessing it, believed himself seriously and very positive
proscribed; to that extent indeed that during the fortnig
given to the young girl for her decision, and although he wa
expected by Céleste day by day and minute by minute, wh
thought no more of la Peyrade than if he was entirely out o
the question, this pitiable boy had not the most distan
thought of breaking the ban.

Luckily for this benighted lover a beneficent fairy wa
watching over him, and the day before the one on whic
Céleste must declare her choice, this came to pass. It wa
Sunday, the day on which the Thuilliers still affected thei
periodical receptions.

Convinced that the leakage, vulgarly known as the "baske
dance," was the ruin of the fortunes of the best establishments
Mme. Phellion was in the habit of going in person to purchas
from her tradespeople. From time immemorial in the Phel
lion household, Sunday was the day of the *pot-au-feu,** and
the wife of that great citizen, in an intentionally dowdy cos
tume, such as good housewives bundle themselves up in wher
they go marketing, was prosaically returning from the butch-
er's, followed by her cook, who carried in her basket a fine
cut of rump of beef. Twice had she rung her door-bell, and
threatening was the storm brewing for the servant-boy, who
was placing his mistress in a position less tolerable than that
of Louis XIV., who only "nearly" waited, by not opening
her door. Just as she gave the bell a third feverish, excited
pull, you can judge of her confusion when she perceived a
coupé draw up, and descending therefrom a lady whom she

* A popular French dish of stewed beef: the same name is given to the stock-pot.

recognized, at this untimely hour, as the elegant Comtesse Torna de Godollo, the Hungarian.

Becoming a scarlet-purple, the unhappy bourgeoise completely lost her head; she floundered in excuses, each more awkward than the last, when Phellion, attired in a dressing-gown and Greek cap, came out of his study to learn what the matter was. After a speech, the pomposity of which made ample amends for the *négligé* of his costume, the great citizen, with that serenity which never deserted him, gallantly offered his hand to the stranger, and after having installed her in the salon:

"Perhaps, without indiscretion, I might ask Madame la Comtesse," said he, "to what I am indebted for the advantages, so unhoped for, of this visit?"

"I desired," replied the Hungarian, "to have a talk with Madame Phellion on a subject of vital interest to her; I have taken the liberty of calling upon her, although so little known to madame."

"Well, now, madame, this is an unexpected honor for our humble home—but what has become of Madame Phellion?" added the worthy man impatiently, going towards the door.

"Do not disturb her, I beg of you," said the Countess. "I have come inopportunely, in the midst of household cares. Brigitte is training me up, and I know the respect one ought to have for domestic duties. Moreover, I am not to be pitied, for I have the compensation of your company, upon which I had not allotted."

Before Phellion could reply Mme. Phellion appeared; a cap with ribbons had replaced the market hat, and a large shawl concealed the other things lacking in the morning toilet. On the entrance of his wife the great citizen made as though he would retire.

"Monsieur Phellion," said the Countess, "you are not out of place in our conference; on the contrary, your excellent judgment may be of the utmost benefit in clearing up a question not less interesting to your worthy wife than to yourself; I allude to the marriage of monsieur, your son."

"The marriage of my son!" said Mme. Phellion, with air of astonishment; "but I am not aware that anything the kind is on the tapis at present."

"The marriage of Monsieur Félix with Céleste is, I thin one of your desires," replied the Countess, "if not one of yo projects?"

"We have never, madame," said Phellion, "taken a special steps toward that object."

"I know that full well," replied the Hungarian; "on t contrary, each one of your family seems to study how to nu lify my efforts; but one thing is clear, and that is, in spite all the reserve, and—I will not mince the matter—in spi of all the bungling brought to the management of th affair, the young people love each other, and they will hav very strong reason to complain if they are not united. It to prevent that catastrophe that I have come here this morn ing."

"We cannot, madame," said Phellion, "fail to be profoundl touched by the interest you manifest for the happiness of ou son; but truly that interest——"

"Is so inexplicable," interrupted the Countess, "that i makes you suspicious?"

"Oh, madame," said Phellion, bowing with a respectful deprecatory air.

"But the explanation is very simple," interrupted th Countess, with animation. "Céleste is a dear, innocent child and I detect a moral value in her that makes me regret to se her sacrificed."

"It is true," said Mme. Phellion, "that Céleste is an ange of sweetness."

"While, as for Monsieur Félix, I dare to interest myself in him because, first, he is the worthy son of the most virtuous of fathers——"

"Madame, I beg——" said Phellion with a graceful obeisance.

"And further by the awkwardness of his true love, which is apparent in his every act and word. We more mature

women can find an inexpressible charm in watching the passion under a form which does not menace us with deceptions and misunderstandings."

"In fact, my son is not brilliant," said Mme. Phellion, with a suspicion of tartness in her tone; "he is not a young man of fashion."

"But he has the more essential qualities," replied the Countess; "an unconscious merit which is the final stamp of intellectual superiority."

"In truth, madame," said Phellion, "you compel us to hear things——"

"That are not beyond the truth," interrupted the Countess. "I have another reason: I am not particularly desirous that M. Peyrade should be made happy, he is false and avaricious. On the ruin of their hopes this man counts on building his swindling schemes."

"It is certain," said Phellion, "that Monsieur de la Peyrade has dark depths which the light has never penetrated."

"And as it was my misfortune to have had a husband of this character, the thought alone of the torture to which Céleste would be reserved by such a fatal union, has given me in the interest of her salvation that impulse of charity which may longer surprise you."

"We did not need such conclusive explanations, madame," said Phellion, "to explain your conduct; but as you have told us where we are remiss, it appears to me that you should kindly indicate what you would have us do in the future."

"How long has it been since any of your family have visited at Thuilliers?" demanded the Countess.

"Well, if my memory serves me," said Phellion, "we were there on the Sunday following the dinner in honor of the housewarming."

"Well, it is a full fortnight. Do you imagine that nothing of importance could occur in that time?" said the Hungarian.

"Of a truth, those three glorious days were enough, in 1830, to throw down a perjured dynasty and lay the foundation of the order of things under which we are now governed."

"You see it yourself," said the Countess. "And on th last evening did nothing occur between Céleste and monsieu your son?"

"Truly," replied Phellion, "a disagreeable conversation the subject of religion; it must be allowed that our go Céleste, who in every other respect has a most lovely natu is a little fanatical in the matter of piety."

"I agree with you," said the Countess; "but she was raise by the mother whom you know; she has never been show the face of sincere piety; she has only seen its mask; repen ant Magdalens of Madame Colleville's kind always wear a air of wishing to retire into the desert in company with death's head. They think that's the best market at which t get religion. After all, now, what was it that Céleste aske of Monsieur Félix? Only that he would read 'The Imitatio of Christ.'"

"He has done that, madame," replied Phellion; "he find it a well-written book, but his convictions—that's the misfor tune—have not in the least changed by its perusal."

"Do you think it shows much cleverness not to let his mis tress see some little change in the inflexibility of his convic tions?"

"My son, madame, has never received from me the leas lesson in smartness; loyalty and the right, these are the prin ciples I have inculcated."

"It seems to me, monsieur, that he is not wanting in loyalty to his convictions, when in dealing with a sore mind, he takes some pains to avoid irritating it. Admitting, however, that Monsieur Félix owes it to himself to act the part of a bar of iron, against which all the supplications of Céleste beat in vain, is that any reason why, after such a scene,—which was not the first of the kind, and which had the character of an open rupture,—when he had the opportunity to meet her in Brigitte's drawing-room, a neutral territory, he should sulk in his tent for a fortnight? Above all, ought he to crown this absurdity by a proceeding which is incomprehensible to me, and which—known to us but recently—has carried despair

to the heart of Céleste, accompanied by a lively sense of irritation?"

"My son is incapable of acting thus. It is impossible. I know nothing of what you allude to," said Phellion; "but I do not hesitate to declare that you have certainly been misinformed."

"Nothing is more true, though. Young Colleville, home for his half-holiday, has just told us that since last Sunday but one Monsieur Félix, who had always gone with the utmost punctuality every other day to teach him, has not been near him. Unless your son is ill, this is a grievous blunder. On the footing with which he stood with the sister, he should have given the brother two lessons a day rather than choose this time to withdraw his attentions."

The Phellions, husband and wife, stared at each other, as if consulting how to reply.

"My son," said Mme. Phellion, "is not exactly ill; but, as you have seen fit to reveal this to us, a thing very strange and not at all like himself, I must admit that since Céleste told him that all was over between her and Félix, a most extraordinary change has passed over him; Monsieur Phellion and myself are very uneasy about it."

"Yes, madame," said Phellion, "the young man is certainly ill at ease."

"What is the matter with him?" asked the Countess, with interest.

"On the evening of the stormy scene," said Phellion, "my son, on returning home, shed scalding tears on the bosom of his mother, and gave us to understand that he believed the joy of his life was over."

"And yet," said Mme. de Godollo, "nothing but what is natural happened; lovers always make the worst of everything."

"Very true," said Madame Phellion; "but since that moment Félix has not made the slightest allusion to his unhappiness, and he returned to his labors with a sort of frenzy. Does that also seem natural to you?"

"That can be explained. Study is considered a great c
soler."

"Nothing is more true," said Phellion, "but in Félix's wh
manner there is an excitement, and at the same time a c
centration difficult to be described. You speak to him and
seems not to hear you; he sits at table and forgets to eat;
else he takes his food so absent-mindedly as to be, so say
medical profession, most injurious to the digestive proce
his duties, his regular occupations, we have to remind h
of,—he so extremely regular, so punctual. The other
while he was at the Conservatory, where he now passes all
evenings, only returning home in the small hours, I went i
his room and looked into his papers; madame, I was ab
lutely alarmed on seeing a paper covered with algebraic c
culations which, by their extent, seemed to me to pass
beyond the limits of the human intellect."

"Perhaps," said the Countess, "he is on the eve of the d
covery of a mighty problem."

"Or else on the road to lunacy," said Mme. Phellion, in
low tone, uttering a sigh.

"A mind equable and calm as is his need not be afraid
that," said the Countess. "But a greater danger threate
his understanding. Unless we stop it this evening by
masterstroke, Céleste is lost to him forever."

"How is that?" said the Phellions, with one voice.

"Perhaps you are ignorant of the fact that Thuillier a
his sister had entered into an express engagement with
Peyrade that he should marry Céleste," said the Countess.

"We at least had our misgivings," said Phellion.

"But the fulfilment of these engagements was put off to
distant period, and subject to certain conditions. After Mo
sieur de la Peyrade had secured the property in la Madelein
he was to obtain the Cross of the Legion of Honor for
Thuillier, write a political pamphlet for him, and finally
procure for him a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. It wa
like a romance of chivalry, in which the hero was to obtain th
hand of the princess on condition of exterminating som
dragon."

"Madame is very bright," said Madame Phellion to her husband, who signaled to her not to interrupt.

"I have no time," replied the Countess, "and it would be useless to tell you of the manœuvres la Peyrade has practised to hasten this marriage, but it concerns you to know that, thanks to his duplicity, Céleste was forced to decide in a fortnight between him and Monsieur Félix; that time expires tomorrow, and, owing to the unfortunate turn taken through your son's attitude, there is imminent danger of her sacrificing her wounded feelings on the altar of her love and interests."

"But what can be done to hinder this, madame?" asked Phellion.

"Fight, monsieur; come this evening in full force to the Thuilliers'; induce your son to come; lecture him until he becomes rather more flexible in his philosophical opinions. 'Paris,' said Henry IV., 'is worth a mass;' but tell him to avoid such questions. He can find in his heart some accents capable of moving the woman he loves. To be on the right side of her is a great advantage. I will be there, and will assist you to the best of my ability, and perhaps, under the inspiration of the moment, I shall hit upon something that will render my assistance valuable. One thing is sure, we have to fight a big battle; if each one does not strive to his utmost, la Peyrade will gain the victory."

"My son is not here, madame," said Phellion. "I wish I had been; you might have aroused him from his torpor. However, I shall impress upon him the gravity of the situation, and certainly he will accompany us this evening to the Thuilliers'."

"It is unnecessary to say," added the Countess, as she rose, "that we must be careful not to give any appearance of collusion; it would be better, in fact, not to be seen speaking together."

"I can assure you, madame, of my prudence," replied Phellion, "and you will please to accept the assurance——"

"Of your most distinguished sentiments," interrupted the Countess, laughing.

"No, madame," gravely responded Phellion, "I reser that formula for the conclusion of my letters; but you w please accept the most unutterable gratitude of myself."

"We will speak of that when we are beyond all danger said Mme. de Godollo, going toward the door, "and if Ma dame Phellion, the tenderest and most virtuous of mothe and wives, will grant me a little place in her regards, I sha be fully repaid."

Mme. Phellion launched into an endless sea of compliment The Countess in her carriage was some distance away befor Phellion had ceased offering his most respectful salutation

In proportion as the element of the Latin quarter becam less assiduous and less frequent in attendance at Brigitte' salon, a livelier Parisian element began to infiltrate therein The house itself had furnished a contingent, and several of th new tenants contributed by their presence to renew the aspec of the Sunday gatherings. The new councillor had made a number of recruits from among his associates in the council The mayor of his arrondissement and several deputy mayors had called upon him after the removal to the Madeleine quarter. Thuillier had hastened to return the civility; he had also the same experience with a number of the superior officers of the First Legion. Among others came Rabourdin, the former head of Thuillier's bureau. Having had the misfortune to lose his wife, whose salon had formerly been a rival of Madame Colleville's, Rabourdin occupied as a bachelor the third floor of their house over the entresol. He was now a director in one of the numerous railroads, ever projected but always delayed by the indecision of the Chamber or rival claims; but he had now become one of the most important personages in the world of finance. At the time of his resignation, under deplorable circumstances, of his position in the bureaux, Phellion was the only one in his office who had stood by him. Being now in a position to reward his friends, Rabourdin, meeting once more his faithful subordinate, at once made him an offer of an easy, lucrative position.

"Môsieur," replied Phellion, "your kindness both touches

and honors me, but my frankness owes you a confession which I trust you will not take amiss. I have no belief in these iron roads, or 'railways,' as the English call them."

"You have a perfect right to your own opinion," said Rabardin, smiling, "but meanwhile we pay our employés very satisfactorily, and I should be pleased to have you with me in that capacity. I know by experience that you are fully reliable."

"Môsieur," replied the great citizen, "I did my duty and nothing more. As for the offer you have been so good as to make me, I cannot accept it. Satisfied with my humble lot, I feel neither the need nor the desire to again embark on an administrative career, and, with the Latin poet, I may say:

"Claudite jam rivos, pueri, sat prata biberunt."

Thus elevated in the social scale, the Thuillier salon still needed another element of vitality, and, to speak as *Madelon* in the "Précieuses ridicules," this "frightful lack of amusement," alluded to by Madame Pheilion in her conversation with Minard, required remedying. Thanks to the attention of Mme. de Godollo, the great organizer, who happily profited by the former relations of Colleville with the musical world, a few artists came to make a diversion from *bouillotte* and *boston*. Out of fashion and old, these two games had to beat a retreat before whist, the [illegible] manner, said the Hungarian Countess, with which respectable people can kill time.

Like Louis XVI., who began by putting his hand to reforms which were subsequently to engulf his throne, Brigitte at first encouraged this interior revolution; and the need of suitably maintaining her rank in the quarter in which she had decided to dwell, had rendered her docile to all the suggestions of comfort and elegance. But by the day on which occurred the scene we are about to relate, an apparently trivial incident had revealed to her the danger of the slope upon which she was standing. The greater number of the new guests

introduced by Thuillier were unaware of the supremacy of sister in the household; upon arrival they naturally as Thuillier to present them to "madame"; of course it was possible that he could inform them that his wife was bu dummy queen who groaned under the iron hand of a Ric lieu, the sole authority. Therefore it was not until after th presentation to the rightful sovereign that they were int duced to Brigitte; and from the coolness of her greeting, sulting from her impatience at being set aside momentari they were not encouraged to put themselves out to please h

Realizing her loss of importance, this Queen Elizabe whose instinct for authority was her ruling passion, said herself, "If I am not on my guard, I shall soon be nobo here."

Pondering over this idea, she began to think that in t project of sharing a common household with la Peyrade, b come the husband of Céleste, the situation, which alrea began to disturb her, would be further complicated. The from a sudden intuition, Félix Phellion, a good young ma too much absorbed in his mathematics ever to become a fo midable rival to her sovereignty, appeared a far more sui able match than the enterprising barrister. She was the fir to regret that the Phellions had come without their so Despite Mme. de Godollo's advances, this terrible lover ha taken as guide the last line of Millevoye's famous elegy: *E son amante ne vint pas*—the beloved came not.

As may well be imagined, Brigitte was not the only one t notice the persistence with which the obstinate young ma kept away from her receptions. Madame Thuillier artlessly and Céleste with feigned indifference, manifested their disap pointment.

As for Mme. de Godollo, wh notwithstanding she possessed a remarkably fine voice, had hitherto needed much urging be fore consenting to sing, when she saw how little attention Félix had paid to her counsels, asked Madame Phellion t play the accompaniment, and between two stanzas of a popular ballad said to her, "Well, and monsieur, your son?"

"He is coming," replied Mme. Phellion; "his father spoke most emphatically to him; but it seems that to-night there is a conjunction of some planets; it is a grand occasion for the gentlemen of the Observatory; he did not feel as though he could dispense——"

"It is simply inconceivable, that he could be so foolish," said the Countess; "was it not enough that he brought his mythology here, that he should now blunderingly drag in his astronomy?"

And her impatience communicating to her voice a singular brilliancy, her song was finished, as the English say, amid thunders of applause. La Peyrade, who dreaded her excessively, was among the first to congratulate her, but she received his compliments with an almost discourteous coolness, which increased their mutual hostility, and he turned away to find consolation with Mme. Colleville. Flavie had too many pretensions to beauty not to feel an emnity toward a woman who in a manner intercepted her due homage.

"And you also mean to say that that woman sings well?" asked Mme. Colleville disdainfully of the barrister.

"At least I had to tell her so," replied la Peyrade, "because there's no surety of securing Brigitte without her. But look at your Céleste. She does not take her eyes off the door; and at every tray that comes in, although it is too late to announce a new arrival, disappointment is depicted on her face."

It may be mentioned in passing that since the reign of Madame Godollo, on reception days trays were passed round in the salon, freely laden with ices, small cakes, and syrups from Tanrade, the leading confectioner.

"Don't worry me," said Flavie; "I know what that foolish girl has in her mind; your marriage will take place only too soon."

"But is it for my own sake?" said la Peyrade; "it is necessary for the future of the whole of us. Come, there are tears in your eyes. I shall leave you; you are unreasonable. The devil! as that old prude Phellion says, the end justifies the means."

And he went toward a group composed of Céleste, Mada Thuillier, Madame de Godollo, Colleville, and Phellion; Mr Colleville followed, and under the strong feeling of jealou she had just displayed she became a savage mother.

"Céleste," said she, "why don't you sing? A number gentlemen wish to hear you."

"Oh, mamma!" said Céleste, "how can I, with my po thread of a voice, sing after madame. Besides, you know th I have a cold."

"That means that you intend to be disagreeable; peop sing as they can, every voice has its own merits."

"My dear," said Colleville, who had just lost twenty fran at a card-table, and found the nerve in his vexation to oppos his wife, "to say one sings as he can is a bourgeois maxim people sing with a voice if they have one, but not after hear ing an operatic voice like that of Madame la Comtesse's; fo my part, I am perfectly willing to let Céleste off warbling sentimental ditty."

"It's a grand idea to spend so much money on expensiv masters," said Flavie, as she left the group, "and then ge nothing in return."

"So," said Colleville, resuming the conversation in which he had been interrupted by the invasion of Mme. Colleville "Félix no longer inhabits the earth; he passes his time among the stars?"

"My dear old colleague," said Phellion, "I am as much annoyed as yourself with my son for neglecting the oldest friends of his family; and, though the contemplation of the great luminous bodies suspended in space by the hand of the Creator presents, in my opinion, more interest to me than your overwrought brain seems to imagine, yet I think that if Félix does not come this evening, as he promised me, he will show a lack of propriety, and I shall lecture him sharply, I can assure you."

"Science," said la Peyrade, "is a fine thing, but, unfortunately, it has the drawback of making bears and maniacs."

"Without counting," said Céleste, "the undermining of all religion."

"In that, my child, you are mistaken," said the Countess. "Pascal, himself a shining example of the falsity of your view, says, if I am not mistaken, that a little science leads us away from religion, but a great deal draws us back to it."

"Yet, madame," said Céleste, "everybody considers Monsieur Félix very learned. When he was giving my brother lessons, François said nothing could be more clear and lucid than his explanations. Yet is he any more religious for his learning?"

"I tell you, my child, that Monsieur Félix is not irreligious, and that with a little gentleness and patience he could be easily converted."

"To bring back a savant to the practice of religion, madame," said la Peyrade, "seems to me a difficult task; these gentlemen put their studies before everything else; tell a geometrician or geologist, for example, that the church imperatively insists on the sanctification of Sunday and a suspension of every kind of work, and they shrug their shoulders, although God himself did not disdain to rest."

"Therefore, by not coming here this evening," said Céleste, innocently, "he not only commits a breach of good manners, but also sins."

"But tell me, my handsome," replied Mme. de Godollo, "do you think that our assembling here to sing ballads and eat ices and speak evil of others, as is too often the practice in drawing-rooms, is more pleasing to God than seeing a scientific man in his observatory engaged in studying the magnificent secrets of the creation?"

"There's a time for all things," said Céleste, "and, as Monsieur la Peyrade says, 'God did not disdain to rest.'"

"But, my dear love," said Mme. de Godollo, "God has the time so to do; He is eternal."

"That," said la Peyrade, "is one of the wittiest impieties ever uttered. That kind of argument serves the turn of folk of the world. They interpret and explain away the most explicit commands of God, they take, choose among them as they will; the free-thinker subjects them to his sovereign

revision, and free-thinking is but a short distance from fr
acting."

During this tirade Mme. de Godollo was watching t
clock; it was now half-past eleven. The salon began
empty. Only one table was going on, the players bei
Minard, Thuillier, and two new acquaintances. Phellion h
just left the group of which he had been a member to jo
his wife, who was in a corner talking with Brigitte, and fro
the liveliness of his gestures he appeared a prey to a deep fee
ing of indignation. All tended to show that the hope of se
ing the tardy lover was evidently lost.

"Monsieur," said the Countess to la Peyrade, "do yo
consider the gentlemen of the Rue des Postes good Catholics?

"Without a doubt," answered the barrister; "religion ha
no more earnest supporters."

"Well, this morning," continued the Countess, "I had th
honor of being received by Father Anselme. He is considere
the model of every Christian virtue, yet this good father is
very learned mathematician."

"I did not say, madame, that the two qualities were in
compatible."

"But you did say that a good Christian would do no man
ner of work on Sunday; thus Father Anselme must be a mis
creant; for at the moment I gained access to his room I foun
him standing in front of a blackboard, a piece of chalk in his
hand, busy with a difficult problem, for the board was covered
with algebraic characters, and, further, he didn't seem to
realize that he might create a scandal, for with him was a
person whom I am not at liberty to name, but it was a young
scientist of great promise, who shared his profane occupation."

Céleste and Mme. Thuillier as they looked at each other
saw a gleam of hope in each other's eyes.

"Why cannot you tell us the name of this young scholar?"
said Madame Thuillier, who was entirely devoid of tact in her
utterances.

"Because he has not, as Father Anselme has, the reputation
of sanctity to absolve him from such a flagrant profanation

of the Sabbath; and besides," added Madame de Godollo significantly, "he begged me not to say that I had met him there."

"Then you know a number of young savants?" asked Céleste; "this one and Monsieur Félix make two."

"My dear beauty, you are an inquisitive little thing; but you cannot make me say what I do not wish to, especially over the confidence of Father Anselme, for your wits would at once be on the gallop."

They were already on the gallop, and every word of the Countess increased the anxiety of the young girl.

"As for me," said la Peyrade, ironically, "I shouldn't be in the least surprised if Father Anselme's collaborator was precisely that Félix Phellion: Voltaire always kept up close relations with the Jesuits who brought him up, only he did not discuss religion with them."

"Well, my young savant does discuss it with his venerable confrère in the sciences; he explains his doubts to him, and, in fact, this was the commencement of their scientific friendship."

"And does Father Anselme," asked Céleste, "hope to convert this young man?"

"He is sure of so doing," replied the Countess. "His young collaborator, apart from religious education, which he never received, is a man of most excellent parts and the highest principles; moreover, he well knows that his conversion would give happiness to a charming young girl whom he loves and also loves him in return. Now, my dear child, you won't get another word out of me; you can fancy what you please."

"Oh! my godmother," said Céleste, yielding to the innocence of her impressions, "if it were he!" And she threw herself weeping into the arms of Madame Thuillier.

At this moment the servant opened the door of the salon and, singular coincidence, announced: "Monsieur Félix Phellion."

The young professor entered, bathed in perspiration, his cravat askew, and himself out of breath.

"A pretty time, this," said Phellion, with severity, "
present yourself."

"My father," said Félix, moving to where Mme. Thuill
and Céleste were seated, "I was unable to leave before t
close of the phenomenon; I could find no coach, and have r
all the way."

"Your ears must have burned on the road," said la P
rade, sneeringly, "for you have occupied the thoughts
these ladies up to now; you have been the subject of a gre
problem to them."

Félix did not answer; he went to greet Brigitte, who ha
just entered from the dining-room, where she had gone
order the domestic not to pass round more trays. He hastene
to salute her. After she had reproached him for the rarity
his visits and receiving her pardon in a "Better late tha
never," he turned to his magnet and was astonished to hea
Madame de Godollo say to him:

"Monsieur, you must pardon my indiscretion done in th
heat of conversation about you; I have told them where I me
you this morning."

"Where have I had the honor of meeting you?" said Félix
"but, madame, I did not see you."

A faint smile lighted up la Peyrade's lips.

"You saw me sufficiently well to ask my confidence as to
where I found you; but at least I did not go further than to
say that I had seen you with Father Anselme sometimes, and
that you had some scientific relations with each other; and
also that you defended your doubts against his arguments the
same as you do with Céleste."

"Father Anselme!" said Phellion, stupidly.

"Yes, without doubt," said la Peyrade, "a great mathematician who does not despair of converting you; Mademoiselle Céleste has shed tears of joy."

Félix looked around with an air of bewilderment. Madame de Godollo looked at him with eyes the language of which a poodle would have understood.

"I wish," said he, finally, "that I could have done a thing

so agreeable to Mademoiselle Céleste, but I am afraid, madame, that you labor under an error."

"Listen to me, monsieur, it seems that I must needs be more precise; and if your timidity prompts you to continue taking a step that can only honor you, then you may contradict me; I must bear the annoyance of having divulged a secret which I had promised you faithfully to keep."

Madame Thuillier and Céleste were a sight to behold. Never had doubt and expectation been more strongly depicted on human faces.

Measuring each word, she said:

"I have told these ladies, because I know how they wish for salvation, and because you were accused of audaciously breaking God's commandments by working on Sunday, that I met you this morning at Father Anselme's house, a scientist like yourself, with whom you were engaged in solving a problem; I said that your conversation with this enlightened and saintly man had led up to other explanations between you, that you had submitted your religious doubts to him, and that he did not despair of refuting your arguments. In confirming my words, there can be nothing to wound your self-esteem. It was only intended as a surprise for Céleste, and I was so stupid as to divulge it; but when she hears you confirm my statements, you will make her too happy, to quibble over the word she is waiting to hear."

"Come, monsieur," said la Peyrade, "there's nothing ridiculous in searching for the light; you, so honorable, such a foe to untruth, can scarcely deny what madame so resolutely affirms."

"Well," said Félix, after a slight pause, "will you, Mademoiselle Céleste, permit me to say a few words to you in private, without witnesses?"

Céleste, after an approving nod from Mme. Thuillier, rose, and Félix took her hand and led her to a window recess, a few steps from which they then were.

"Céleste," he said, "I beg you to wait a little longer. See,"

he added, pointing to the constellation of the Chariot, "beyo those visible stars, there lies a future for us. As regards wh has been said about Father Anselme, I cannot admit it, f it is not true. It is a well-meant story; but have patienc you shall hear things——"

Céleste left him, and he remained gazing at the stars.

"He is mad," said the young girl in accents of despair, a she resumed her seat by Mme. Thuillier.

Félix confirmed this prognostication by rushing out of th room without perceiving the emotion with which his fath and mother followed him.

Shortly after this exit, which had stupefied everybody, l Peyrade approached Mme. de Godollo and respectfully said

"You must admit, madame, that it is very difficult to dra a man out of the water when he is intent on drowning——

"I had no idea," replied the Countess, "of such unparal leled simplicity; it is too absurd. I shall go over to th enemy, and with that enemy I am, when he pleases, ready t go into a full and frank explanation in my own rooms."

The next day Théodose fel himself possessed by a curiosit on two points: How would Céleste extricate herself from th option she had accepted? Then this Comtesse Torna de Godollo, what did she mean by what she had said; and what did she want of him?

The first of these questions was indisputably the most important. However, by a secret instinct la Peyrade felt himself more strongly attracted towards a solution of the second. But in deciding to take up the trail of the latter, he thoroughly understood that in the meeting to which he had been invited he could not go too well prepared.

It had rained in the morning, and this deep calculator knew full well that a splash on a man's polished boots might cause a prejudice against him.

He, therefore, sent his porter for a hack, and about three o'clock drove from the Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer toward the fashionable neighborhood of the Madeleine. His toilet was naturally the subject of some thought, and presented a

compromise between the negligent ease of morning attire and the ceremonious style of evening dress. Necessitated by his profession to wear a white cravat, which he rarely laid aside, and not daring to dispense with a dress-coat, he felt drawn to one of the extremes he was desirous of avoiding. But by buttoning his coat and wearing straw instead of lemon-colored gloves he managed to "unsolemnize" himself, and thus avoided the provincial and solicitor aspect which a man in full dress always conveys to the mind when seen on the streets of Paris before the sun has set.

The acute diplomatist took good care not to be carried to the door of the house where he was expected. He had no desire to be seen from the entresol alighting from a public carriage, and he feared the occupants of the story above might see him paying a visit to the apartments below. Such a step would have given rise to endless comments. He took care, therefore, to stop at the corner of the Rue Royale; from thence, by carefully walking on tip-toes over the pavement, which was nearly dry, he reached the house without mishap. Arrived at the door of the house he had the good fortune to escape being seen by the concierges. The husband, sexton at the Church de la Madeleine, was absent on duty, and his wife was busy showing a vacant apartment to an inquiring tenant. So, avoiding observation, Theodose was able to glide up to the door of the sanctuary he intended to enter. A slight pull on a silk cord, adorned with tassels, rang a bell in the interior of the apartment. In a few seconds a sharper peal from another bell of less calibre appeared directed to a maid-servant, who was not tardy in opening the door to suit her mistress. In fact, a moment later a maid-servant, of mature age and too sensible to affect a stage costume, stood before him.

The advocate declined to give his name, and the maid-servant ushered him into a severely luxurious dining-room, where he was requested to wait. A minute later the attendant reappeared, and he was admitted into a most coquettish and splendid salon. The divinity of the place sat before a table covered with Venetian cloth, in which gold thread sparkled

among the rich embroidery. As la Peyrade went in Countess bowed without rising, and said, as the maid-serv pushed forward a chair:

"Will monsieur allow me to seal a letter of some imp tance?"

The barrister made a bow of assent; the handsome foreig then took from a tortoise-shell inlaid desk of the Boulle t a sheet of blue-tinted English paper which she placed in envelope; after she had written the address, she rose and ra the bell. The maid appeared and lighted a small spirit la set in a small, charmingly carved writing-desk; over the la was hung a silver-gilt crucible-shaped vessel, in which was scrap of scented sealing-wax; as soon as the flame had mel this the maid poured it on the envelope and handed her m tress an armorial seal. This she impressed with her own fa hands on the wax, and said: "Take it at once to its address

As the woman made a movement to take the letter she i advertently let it fall, near to la Peyrade's feet, who made quick movement to pick it up and involuntarily read thereo "His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs." And hig up in a corner, the significant word "Personal" imparted this missive a character of intimacy.

"Thanks, monsieur," said the Countess, in receiving the le ter from the advocate, who had the good taste to return it her in a manner to testify his desire to serve her. "Be s good, mademoiselle, as not to lose it," she added severely t the maid.

The Countess then left the table and took her seat on lounge covered with pearl gray satin. During this transac tion la Peyrade had had the pleasure of taking an inventory of the magnificence with which he was surrounded. Picture by the great masters relieved by a background of dark hang ings lighted up by silk fringes and laces; on a stand of gilded wood an immense Japanese vase; in front of the windows two jardinières, in which a *lilium rubrum* with curling petals rose above white and red camellias and dwarf Chinese mag-

nolias, with lemon-colored flowers, with a border of bright poppies. In one corner a panoply composed of arms of the most and oddest aspect, explained by the nationality—always a trifle barbaric (*hussarde*)—of the mistress of the house; finally, some bronzes and statuettes chosen with exquisite taste; and in the chairs rolling noiselessly over a Turkish carpet, a distracting collection of forms and stuffs,—such was the furnishing of this salon, which the advocate had had occasion to visit with Brigitte and Thuillier before it was occupied. It seemed transfigured to a point beyond recognition. With a little more knowledge of the world the advocate would have been less surprised at the marvelous care that the mistress had taken to decorate this retreat. A woman's drawing-room is her kingdom, and an absolute kingdom; for there, in every sense of the word, he reigns and governs; there she fights more than one battle, and generally comes off victorious. Here, in her drawing-room has she not chosen all the ornaments, harmonized all the colors, and does she not regulate the light or shade at her will? She may not be a skilled medium, but it is impossible that there, where everything has been arranged by her own hands, she does not know its full value, that each one of its advantages should not stand out in bold relief. You may say that you cannot know all a woman's perfections unless you have seen her in the prismatic atmosphere of her own drawing-room; but guard against presuming to judge and know her if you have never seen her anywhere else. Coquettishly sunk in a corner of the couch, her head resting carelessly on an arm whose shape and whiteness might be followed by the eye almost to the elbow in the loose, flowing sleeve of a black velvet dressing-gown, her Cinderella-like feet in small slippers of Russia leather, resting at ease on an orange-satin cushion embroidered in flowers,—the beautiful Hungarian resembled a portrait by Lawrence or Winterhalter, plus the artlessness of the pose.

"Monsieur," said she, with a smile and a slightly foreign accent which gave an added charm to her words, "I cannot help thinking what a queer thing it is that a man of your

spirit and rare penetration should have an idea that you
an enemy in me."

"But, Madame la Comtesse," replied la Peyrade, allo
her to read in his eyes the astonishment he felt, not unmi
with distrust, "you will admit that every appearance wa
that nature. A rival crosses my path in relation to a mar
which offers every inducement to me. This rival does me
favor of showing himself miraculously stupid, so that I c
easily have set him aside, when suddenly a most graceful
unlooked-for auxiliary rushes in and assists him on his
vulnerable point."

"Admit," said the Countess, laughing, "that this pro
is a brilliant man, and that he has seconded me bravely."

"His awkwardness," replied la Peyrade, "was not, I
agine, entirely unforeseen by you, and the protection
which you deign to honor him, is not the less cruel to me.

"What a great misfortune it would be," replied the
eigner with charming audacity, "if your marriage with ma
moiselle were prevented! Do you really care so very much
that schoolgirl?"

In that last word, but above all in the tone in which it
pronounced, there was more than contempt,—there was hat
This did not escape an observer of la Peyrade's keenness.
he only went on to say:

"Madame, the vulgar expression, 'to make an end of
sums up the situation, where, after a long-drawn fight, a m
has reached the limit of his strength and the end of his il
sions, and when he would make any sort of compromise w
his future. Now, when this end is presented in the form o
young girl who, I admit, has more goodness than beauty,
one who brings to her husband the fortune so indispensa
to the welfare of conjugal companionship, why should it
cite astonishment that his heart is filled with gratitude
that he should eagerly welcome the prospect of peaceful ha
piness?"

"I had always imagined," replied the Countess, "that
man's intelligence and power should be the measure of

tion; one, I should think, so wise as to make himself the man's advocate would have less modesty and fewer pas- aspirations."

"Ah, madame," said la Peyrade, "the iron hand of neces- kes one resign himself to strange things; the question y bread is one before which everybody bends and de- himself. Was not Apollo compelled to 'make a living' nding Admetus' sheep?"

"Admetus' sheepfold," objected Mme. de God lo, "was st a royal sheepfold; but certainly Apollo would never ubmitted to become the shepherd of a—bourgeois."

pause which preceded the last word of the handsome ner seemed to supply the place of a proper name, and la de understood that from simple pity Thuillier had not ntroduced into the discussion, which had stopped at the without designating the individual.

"I believe, madame, that your distinction is not less true subtle," answered la Peyrade; "but Apollo has no "

"I don't like people who charge too much," said the ss, dryly; "still less do I like those who sell their goods the market price. I am always afraid lest they should me the victim of some complicated knavish trick. You now your own value, monsieur, and your hypocritical ty annoys me immensely; it shows me that my kindly s have not even produced the beginning of confidence us."

"I assure you, madame, that up to now my life has not me any reason to think myself possessed of dazzling rity."

"Well," said the Hungarian, "perhaps I ought to admit desty of the man who will accept the pitiable finale of which I have intended to do my best to prevent."

"I myself," replied la Peyrade, "might believe in that ence which in order to rescue me has up to this time me so roughly."

The Countess threw a reproachful glance at her guest; her

hands toyed with the ribbons of her dress; she cast down her eyes and allowed a sigh to escape her, so faint as to be scarcely perceptible, so slight in fact that it might have passed as her regular breathing.

"You are rancorous," said she, "and judge people by yourself. After all," she added, as if in reflection, "you may possibly be right in reminding me that I have gone far out of my way in meddling absurdly in interests that are none of my concern. Go on, dear monsieur, and prosper in this so glorious marriage which offers you such a combination of inducements; only let me hope that you may never repent your course, which I will no longer try to postpone."

The Provencal had not been spoilt by women. The poverty against which he had been so long struggling never leads to affairs of gallantry, and, since he had thrown off its worst clutches, his mind had been given up to the anxious work of providing for his future; with the exception of the farce played with Mme. Colleville, affairs of the heart had had a small share in his life. Like all overbusy men who possess nevertheless a sensual nature, he was content to accept the ready-made, ignoble love that any night can be bought at corner crossings and that is easily reconciled with the exterior of devotion.

We can thus understand the perplexity of this novice in gallantry when he found himself placed between the fear of allowing an enticing opportunity to escape, and of finding a serpent concealed in the flowers which seemed opening under his hand.

A reserve too marked, an ardor too lukewarm, might wound the self-esteem of the fair foreigner and dry up suddenly the spring from which she apparently invited him to drink; but on the other hand, if this apparent interest was only a snare, if this kindness, but poorly explained as it seemed to him, of which he had so suddenly become the object, was but a bait to entice him toward a snare which might be used to compromise him with the Thuilliers, what a blow at his supposed

shrewdness, what a part to play—that of the dog dropping the meat to grasp the shadow!

We know that la Peyrade was something after the school of Tartuffe, and the frankness with which that master declares to Elmire that unless a few of the promised favors are granted he could no longer trust her tender advances, seemed almost adapted to the occasion, though there was more softness in its form.

"Madame la Comtesse," said he, "you have made of me a man who is much to be pitied; I was marching gayly to this marriage, and you take from me all my faith; and yet, if I break it off, what can I, with that great capacity you credit me with, do with the liberty thus acquired?"

"La Bruyère has said, if I am not mistaken, that nothing so refreshes the blood as having avoided committing a folly."

"I grant that; but that is a negative benefit; I am of an age and in such a position as to desire more serious results. The interest you show in me cannot, I imagine, end at leaving a blank page. I love mademoiselle, not, it is true, with an imperative, dominating passion, but still I do love her, her hand is promised to me, and before renouncing——"

"So," said the Countess, briskly, "in a given case you would not object to a rupture? And," added she, in a calmer tone, "there might be some chance of making you understand that in grasping thus at the first opportunity you compromise your whole future in case a more suitable marriage were to offer?"

"At the very least, madame, I should want to definitely foresee this."

This determination appeared to annoy the Countess.

"Faith, monsieur," said she, "is only a virtue when it believes without seeing. You doubt yourself; this is another form of stupidity. I am not happy in my protégés."

"But, madame, it cannot be very indiscreet to ask for at least an intimation of what your benevolence has designed for me?"

"Very indiscreet," replied the Hungarian, coldly, "for it

shows me that you only offer me a confidence on conditions. Say no more. You have gone far with Mademoiselle Colleville; you say she suits you in many things, marry her; one more attack, you won't again find me in your way."

"But does mademoiselle really suit me?" replied la Peyrade; "that is exactly where you have raised my doubts. Don't you think you are cruel in casting me first in one direction and then in another without offering anything to support me?"

"Ah!" said the Countess in an impatient tone, "you want a reason for my opinion; well, monsieur, there is a very conclusive reason, one that I can assure you of: Céleste does not love you."

"I think myself," said la Peyrade, humbly, "that I am on the way to a marriage of convenience."

"And she cannot love you," continued Mme. de Godollo, with animation, "for she cannot understand you. The man who should be her husband is that blond young man, as shy and insipid as herself; the contact of these two natures without life and without heat will result in that lukewarm duet which in the opinion of the world in which she was born and where she has lived constitutes the *ne plus ultra* of conjugal felicity. Enriched bourgeois, *parvenus*, there's the roof under which you intend resting after your hard labors and long trials. Try to make this little simpleton understand that when wealth has the good fortune to meet talent on the road, the former ought to feel itself very much honored by the meeting. Especially make the miserable and odious crowd that surrounds her understand it. And don't you know that twenty times a day they will make it manifest to you that your share in the partnership is very light against their money? On the one side the 'Iliad,' the 'Cid,' the 'Der Freischütz,' and the Vatican frescoes; on the other side a hundred thousand crowns in ready money. And tell me to what side will they turn their admiration? The artist, the man of imagination, who tumbles into the middle-class atmosphere, shall I tell you to what I compare him? To Daniel cast into the den of lions, less the miracle of the Scriptures."

This invective against the middle classes had been delivered in a tone of ardent conviction that could scarcely fail to communicate itself to her listener.

"Ah, madame!" exclaimed la Peyrade, "how eloquently you present the thoughts that have been mine so often! But I felt lashed to the cruel necessity of gaining a position."

"Necessity, position!" interrupted the Countess, in a still more heated tone, "words without meaning! They have no sound to men of ability, though they are formidable obstacles to fools. Necessity, does that exist for noble natures who know how to will? A Gascon minister said these words, which should be graven over the threshold of every career: 'All things come to him who knows how to wait.' Are you ignorant that to men of superior stamp marriage is either a chain which rivets them to the most vulgar of existences, or a wing that bears them to the highest summits of the social world? The wife you need, monsieur,—and she would not be long lacking in your career if you had not with such incredible haste offered yourself to the first fortune which turned up,—the one you should have chosen is a woman capable of understanding you, able to read you; one who would be a collaborator, an intelligent confidante, not a mere incarnation of *pot-au-feu;* who to-day is your secretary, but to-morrow may be the true wife of a deputy or an ambassador; in short, one who could offer you her heart for a mainspring, her salon for a stage, her friends for a ladder, and who in return for all she gives you of ardor and strength would ask no more than to sit near your throne in the glare of the prosperity and glory that she foresaw would be your lot."

Intoxicated by her own words the Hungarian was magnificent, her eyes sparkled, her nostrils dilated; the perspective her vivid eloquence had unfurled she appeared to see, to touch with her quivering hands. For a moment la Peyrade was blinded with this kind of sunrise which burst suddenly upon his life.

At the same time, he was an eminently prudent man, who had made it a rule to never lend anything except on the

soundest security; he was impelled to still further weigh the situation.

"Madame la Comtesse," said he, "you just now reproached me with speaking like a bourgeois, and I, in turn, fear that you talk like a goddess. I admire you, I listen to you, but I am not convinced. These devotions, these sublime abnegations, are perhaps met with in heaven; but on our earth who may boast that he has seen them?"

"You are mistaken, monsieur," said the Countess, solemnly; "such cases are rare, but neither impossible nor incredible; the fault is only in not having the skill to find and the hand to grasp them when offered to you."

So saying she majestically rose.

La Peyrade comprehended that he had ended by displeasing her; he felt that she dismissed him; he rose in his turn, bowed respectfully, and begged to be allowed to call again.

"Monsieur," replied Mme. de Godollo, "among us Hungarians, a primitive people and almost savages, when a door is open, both leaves are opened; but when it is closed, it is double-locked."

This dignified and ambiguous response was accompanied by a slight inclination of the head. Bewildered, confounded by this behavior, which was so new to him, which bore little resemblance to that of Flavie, Brigitte, and Mme. Minard, he went away asking himself if he had played his game aright.

On leaving Mme. de Godollo, la Peyrade felt that he must have time to think. After all, what could he extract from the conversation he had just had with this strange woman? Was it a snare, or had a rich wife been offered him? Under such a doubt, to press Céleste for an immediate decision was neither wise nor prudent; for to solicit an answer was to take an engagement upon himself, and to close the door to the chance vaguely hinted at as yet which had just been suggested to him. The result of Théodose's self-communings as he walked along the boulevard was, that his chief aim must be

to gain time. Consequently, in lieu of going to the Thuilliers', he went home and wrote the following note:

My Dear Thuillier:

I daresay you will think it strange that I have not presented myself at your house to-day; partly because I dread the sentence and because I do not care to be taken for an impatient, ill-bred creditor. A few days, more or less, will matter little under the circumstances, and yet Mlle. Colleville may find them desirable as giving her entire freedom of choice. I shall not call, therefore, until you write me. I am now calmer, and I have added a few more pages to our manuscript; it needs but little more to be ready for the printer. Ever yours,

Théodose de la Peyrade.

Two hours later a servant dressed in what was evidently the first transition toward a livery they had not yet decided to venture on, the "male" servant spoken of by Minard, brought la Peyrade this answer:

Come this evening without fail; we will talk the whole affair over with Brigitte.

Your most affectionately devoted,

Jérôme Thuillier.

"Good," said la Peyrade, "there is a hitch somewhere; I shall have time to turn myself around."

On the evening that he visited the Thuilliers, at the very moment he was announced, the Countess de Godollo, who was with Brigitte, hastily rose up and went out; on meeting the advocate she saluted him ceremoniously. Nothing conclusive was to be deduced from this abrupt departure, which might signify anything.

When he arrived, and after talking of the weather and so forth, as people do who have met to discuss a delicate subject about which they are not sure of coming to an understanding, the matter was brought up by Brigitte, who had sent out her

brother to take his walk on the boulevards, telling him to leave her to manage the business.

"My boy," said Brigitte, "it was a gentlemanly thing of you not to come here to-day like a 'grab-all,' to put your pistols to our throats, for we are not, as it happens, quite ready to answer you. I really think," she added, using a metaphor from her old business of bill-discounter, "that Céleste needs a little renewal."

"So," said la Peyrade, quickly, "she has not then decided in favor of Monsieur Félix Phellion?"

"Rogue!" replied the old maid, "you fixed that last night; but you know, also, that she inclines a little to that side."

"One would be blind not to see that," said the advocate.

"That is not, however, an obstacle to my plans; but it will explain to you why I asked a little credit for Céleste, and why I sought to put off the marriage. I wished to give you time to make your way into the good graces of the little one, but you and Thuillier have upset my plans."

"I think nothing has been done without your knowledge; and if during the past fortnight I have not spoken to you about the affair, it is from pure discretion. Thuillier had told me that it was all settled between you."

"On the contrary, Thuillier knows very well that I had no desire to meddle with your arrangements, and perhaps if you had not been such a stranger lately, I might have been the first to tell you that I did not approve of them. However, I may say that I have done nothing to hinder their success."

"That is not enough," said la Peyrade, "your help was necessary."

"Very likely; but I, understanding women better than you, being one myself, I doubted whether with two lovers to choose from Céleste would not consider herself authorized to think complacently of the one who pleased her best! and I had wisely left the matter of Félix in the shade, knowing very well the exact moment to bring her little head to reason."

"In fine," said la Peyrade, "she refuses me?"

"It is much worse than that. She accepts you, saying that

she had given her word; but it is easy to see that she looks upon herself as a victim. If I were in your place, I should not consider my success either assuring or flattering."

In any other state of mind, la Peyrade would have answered that he accepted the sacrifice and would make it his business to win her heart, which, for the moment, had been given reluctantly; but a little delay better suited his end.

"What is your advice?" he asked Brigitte. "What shall I do?"

"In the first place," said Brigitte, "I would finish the pamphlet of Thuillier's, he is going crazy for it, and then leave me to manage your interests," replied Brigitte.

"But are they in friendly hands? For, little aunt, I could not help seeing that you have changed somewhat in your feelings toward me."

"I am changed toward you! and in what do you see me changed, you dreamer?"

"Oh! in little things," said la Peyrade; "but it is sure that since the introduction here of this Countess Torna——"

"My poor boy, the Hungarian has been of much service to me, I must acknowledge that; but is that any reason why I should be false to you, you who have done us much greater services?"

"Still," said the crafty la Peyrade, "you know that she has spoken much that is bad about me?"

"That's the simplest matter, whatever she may have said: those fine ladies expect the whole world to adore them, and she knows that your head is full of Céleste; but all she has said about you runs off me like water off oilcloth."

"So, little aunt," asked la Peyrade, "I am to count on you?"

"Yes; if you don't torment me, and allow me to manage matters."

"Well, tell me, then, what you intend doing," said la Peyrade, with an air of jolly good humor.

"First, I shall forbid Félix the house."

"Is that possible?" said the barrister, "or is it the least bit civil?"

"Very possible, and I shall make Phellion himself tell him. As he makes a hobby-horse of his principles, he'll see that if his son won't do what is necessary to win the hand of Céleste, he ought to rid us of his presence."

"And afterward?" said la Peyrade.

"Afterward I shall signify to Céleste that as she was allowed the liberty of choosing a husband from one or the other, and as she did not choose Félix, she must put up with you, who are a pious fellow, such as she wants. You be easy; I'll make the best of you, especially your generosity in not pressing your attentions when you might have profited thereby. But that will take quite a week, and if Thuillier's pamphlet is not finished by then, I don't know but what we shall be obliged to send him to Charenton."

"In two days the pamphlet can be ready; but are we quite [illegible], little aunt, that you are playing a square game? The saying is that mountains cannot meet, but men do; and, certainly, when the time for election comes, I can do Thuillier good or bad service. The other day, do you know, I had a terrible fright. I had about me a letter in which he spoke of the pamphlet as being written by me. I thought for a moment that I had lost that letter at the Luxembourg. If I had, what a scandal there would have been in the quarter!"

"Is there any one who would care to play tricks on such a sly fellow as you?" said the old maid, quite understanding the covert threat implied. "But, really," added she, "why should you find fault with us? Are you not yourself behindhand with your promises? That Cross which was to be given within a week, that pamphlet that should have been out long ago?"

"The pamphlet and the Cross will each bring the other," replied la Peyrade, rising. "Tell Thuillier to come and see me to-morrow evening. I think by then we can correct the last sheet. But don't lend an ear to the machinations of Madame de Godollo; I have an idea that she designs to make herself the entire mistress of this house; she wants to alienate all your friends, and in the meantime appropriate Thuillier."

"In fact," said the old maid, whom the infernal barrister had touched in a sensitive spot, the love of authority, "I must see into this; she is a little coquette, that little madame."

Peyrade derived another benefit from his adroitly thrown estimation. From the reply of Brigitte he learned that the Countess had not spoken to her of the visit he had paid her during the day. This reticence might mean much.

Four days later the printer, the stitcher and the hot-presser had done their work: Thuillier, in the evening, could give himself the inexpressible honor of commencing a walk on the boulevards, which he continued through the passages of the Palais-Royal, pausing before every bookstore window to steal a glance at a yellow poster, shining in black letters, with the famous title:

DE L'IMPÔT ET DE L'AMORTISSEMENT.

PAR J. THUILLIER,

Membre du conseil général de la Seine.

Having managed to persuade himself that the care he had given to the proof-reading and revising had the merit of making the work his own, his paternal heart, like that of the Maître Corbeau, could not contain itself for joy. It should be added that he had but little opinion of those booksellers who did not announce this latest new work for sale, destined, as he fondly believed, to be a European event. Without really being able to see how he could punish them for their indifference, he nevertheless made a list of these recalcitrant persons, and wished them all possible evils, as though it were a personal affront.

The next day he spent in the delightful occupation of addressing a number of presentations, wrapping up fifty sample copies to which the sacramental inscription, "From the author," seemed to him to communicate an inestimable value.

But the third day of the sale brought his happiness a slight

check. He had chosen for his publisher a young man, who, rushing his business at a break-neck pace, had lately established himself in the Passages des Panoramas, where he paid a ruinous rent,—a nephew of Barbet, the publisher, whom Brigitte had for a tenant in her old house. He flinched at nothing, and when his uncle recommended him to Thuillier, he was assured that if he were not restricted in the advertising he would sell the first edition and print another within a week.

Now Thuillier had spent about fifteen hundred francs for advertising; a profusion of copies had been sent to the journals, and, after three days had gone by, only SEVEN copies had been sold, and three of these on credit. It might be presumed that the young publisher would have lost some of his assurance with this; but, on the contrary, this Guzman of the book-trade said:

"I am delighted at what has happened. If we had sold a hundred copies I should be very uneasy as to the fifteen hundred we have printed; I call this hanging fire, whereas this paltry sale goes to prove that the edition will go off with a rush."

"But when?" demanded Thuillier, to whom this view seemed somewhat paradoxical.

"*Parbleu!*" responded Barbet, "when we shall have notices in all the journals. The advertisements serve only to arouse public attention. People's minds are excited, and they say: 'Here is a publication which should be interesting, "*De l'Impôt et de l'Amortissement*" (*Taxation and Its Abatement*). That is a suggestive title.' But the more suggestive the title is, the more suspicious are they; they have been taken in so often. Then they await the criticisms of the press. For a book destined to a moderate sale there are always a hundred purchasers off-hand; but after them—your servant, sir. We sell no more."

"Then you don't think that the sale is hopeless?" said Thuillier.

"On the contrary, I take a most favorable view of this. As

soon as the 'Debats,' the 'Constitutionnel,' the 'Siècle,' and the 'Press' have reviewed it, especially if it gets 'hammered' by the 'Debats,' which is minister al, it will go off in four days."

"You rattle that off right easily," replied Thuillier, "but how shall we get hold of these leaders of the press?"

"Leave that to me," said Barbet, "I am on the best of terms with the chief editors; they say the devil is in me and that I remind them of Ladvocat in his best days."

"Then, my dear boy, you ought to have seen to this before."

"Ah! but permit me, Papa Thuillier, there's only one way of 'seeing' a newspaper-man; as you grumble about the fifteen hundred francs for advertising, I don't want to suggest another expense to you."

"Expense for what?"

"When you were nominated for the Council," replied the bookseller, "where was your election planned?"

"*Parbleu!* in my home," answered Thuillier.

"At your home, without doubt, but at a dinner followed by a ball, and the ball followed by a supper. Well, my dear master, there is but one way to do this business; Boileau says:

> "Tout se fait en dinant dans le temps où nous sommes,
> Et c'est par les diners *que l'on* gouverne les hommes." *

"You think, then, that I ought to give the journalists a dinner?"

"Yes, but not at your own house. When there are women present, you see, the journalists are out of their element. They are forced to restrain themselves. Then it is not a dinner, but a breakfast, which will suit us best. In the evening these gentleman have 'first performances' to attend, articles to prepare for their papers, to say nothing of side attractions. In the morning, on the contrary, they have nothing to think of. I have always given breakfasts."

* "In the times in which we live everything is settled at the dinner-table, and we govern men by giving them dinners."

"But that costs money; journalists are all a lot of gourmands."

"Pshaw! twenty francs per head, without the wine. Given, say, ten of them, with a hundred crowns you could do it nicely. Even from an economical point, the breakfast is preferable; a dinner would cost you at least five hundred francs."

"How you run on, young man," said Thuillier.

"*Dame*, everybody knows that it costs something to get a nomination, and you will thus prepare for it."

"But how shall I invite these gentlemen? Must I go and invite them myself?"

"Not at all; you have sent them your pamphlet, now you beg them to meet you at Philippe's or Véfour's; they'll catch on all right."

"Ten guests," said Thuillier, entering into the idea. "I did not know there were so many important journalists."

"Quite true," replied the publisher, "but we must have the curs, for they bark the loudest. The breakfast is sure to be well talked about; they will think you have been picking and choosing, and each one left out would become your enemy."

"Then, in your opinion, it will be sufficient to send the invitations?"

"Yes; I will make out a list. You will write the notes and send them to me. I will see that they are delivered. Some of them I will present personally."

"If I were sure that this expense would have the desired effect," said Thuillier, with indecision.

"*If I were sure* is very pretty," said Barbet, with importance; "but, my dear master, this is money placed on mortgage; with that I can guarantee you selling the fifteen hundred copies. That at forty sous, and allowing the discounts, makes three thousand francs. You see that covers your costs and extras—more than covers them."

"Well! I'll talk it over with la Peyrade," said Thuillier, as he went out.

"As you will, dear master, but decide quickly, for nothing

ts mildewed so soon as a book; write hot, serve hot, sell it : that's the rule of three for authors, publishers, and the lic; outside of that everything falls flat, and is no good to h."

When la Peyrade was consulted he did not really think so uch of the plan; but now he had begun to feel the bitterest mosity against Thuillier, so he was quite delighted to see is new tax levied on his self-conceit, inexperience, and mpesity.

As to Thuillier, his mania for posing as a statesman and beming famous, took possession of him to such a degree, that hile groaning over this new demand upon his purse, he had already decided upon the sacrifice before asking the advoate's opinion. The very reserved and conditional approval of Peyrade was then more than sufficient to confirm his resotion, and the same evening he visited Barbet, and asked for e famous list of invitations. Barbet gayly produced his ttle catalogue. Fifteen instead of the original number were down, without counting himself or la Peyrade, whom Thuillier t he should need in encountering a crowd of men with whom had reason to think he would be out of place. When Thuillier had cast his eyes over the paper:

"Ah, there! my dear boy," said he to the publisher, "you have given me the names of journals that I never even heard What is this 'Moralisateur,' this 'Lanterne de Diogène,' this 'Pelican,' and this 'Écho de la Bièvre'?"

"You do well," replied Barbet, "to fall foul of 'Écho de la Bièvre,' a paper printed in the twelfth arrondissement, which u expect to carry, and which is read by all the rich tanners the quarter."

"Well, pass that, then; but the 'Pelican'?"

"The 'Pelican'? Why, that journal is on every dentist's iting-room table; dentists make more *puffs* than all the rest f the world; how many teeth do you suppose are daily drawn Paris?"

"Strike that out," said Thuillier, who decisively effaced a sufficient number of names to reduce the list to fourteen.

"If any one should fail to come," said Barbet, "we shall number thirteen."

"Nonsense!" said the strong-minded Thuillier. "Does this superstition trouble me?"

Finally the list was closed at fourteen guests, and the invitations were written at the publisher's desk, for two days from date, on Barbet's assurance that owing to the urgency of the matter no one would be disturbed at the brevity of the notice. The meeting was appointed at Véfour's, the one most extensively patronized by the bourgeoisie and provincials. Barbet arrived even before Thuillier, wearing a cravat so enormous as to itself become a feature among those satirical guests. The publisher had taken it upon himself to change sundry of the dishes: instead of having the champagne served in the bourgeois fashion with the dessert, he ordered it placed on the table at the commencement of the repast, properly iced, together with a few dishes of shrimps, of which the amphitryon had not thought.

Thuillier, who gave a verbal approval to these changes, was followed by la Peyrade; then a long pause before any others appeared. Breakfast was ordered for eleven, but at a quarter before twelve not a guest had come. Barbet, never at a loss, made the crushing remark that breakfasts at a restaurant were like funerals, when eleven meant twelve. As a fact, just before that hour, two goat-bearded gentlemen arrived, exhaling a strong odor of the smoking-room. Thuillier effusively thanked them for the "honor" they were about to do him; and then came another long period of waiting the tortures of which it is needless to relate. At one, five only of the invited guests had arrived, exclusive of Barbet and la Peyrade. It is needless to say that no self-respecting journalist had accepted this absurd invitation. They took their places at table; a few polite speeches reached Thuillier's ears as to the "immense" interest the publication of his pamphlet had excited, but this failed to blind him to the fact of a dismal failure. Only for the vivacity of the publisher, who had seized the reins dropped by his patron, gloomy as Hippolytus on the way to Mycenæ,

thing could have equaled the depression and the icy coldness of this meeting.

After the removal of the oysters, the champagne and Chablis had begun to give a slight rise to the temperature when a waiter in a cap rushed into the banqueting-room and gave the latter a most unexpected and crushing blow.

"Boss," said the newcomer to Barbet—he was a clerk in the grocer's store—"we are done for! The police have raided the commissary and two men have come to seize monsieur's pamphlet; they left this paper with me for you."

"See what this says, Monsieur the Barrister," said Barbet, as he handed the paper to la Peyrade. At this stroke his habitual assurance paled somewhat.

"A summons to appear, without delay, before the Assize Court," said la Peyrade, after reading the sheriff's scrawl.

Becoming as pale as death:

"Then didn't you fill all the necessary formalities?" asked the publisher of the publisher in a choking voice.

"Oh! This is not a question of formalities," replied la Peyrade; "it is seized as illegal printed matter, which excites hatred and contempt for the government. You will find at home, my poor Thuillier, a similar compliment awaiting you."

"But this must be treason, then!" said Thuillier, who had completely lost his head.

"*Pardieu!* my dear boy, you must know what you put in the pamphlet; for my part, I didn't see anything bad enough to hang a cat for."

"There's a misunderstanding somewhere," said Barbet, recovering a little courage. "It will be all explained, the result will be a fine cause for complaints; is not that so, gentlemen?"

"Waiter, a pen and ink!" exclaimed one of the journalists appealed to.

"You'll have time enough to write your article," said one of his colleagues; "what has a bomb to do with this *filet* [illegible]"

This was a parody on a famous speech of Charles XII., of Sweden, whom a cannon-ball interrupted while he was dictating to his secretary.

"Gentlemen," said Thuillier, rising, "you will excuse m if, as Monsieur Barbet thinks, it is all a mistake, it ought t explained immediately: I shall at once, with your permiss go to the court. La Peyrade," added he, significantly, " will not refuse, I think, to accompany me. And you, my d publisher, had better come with us."

"My faith, no!" said Barbet; "when I breakfast I brea fast; if the police have blundered, so much the worse f them."

"But suppose the action is a serious one?" exclaimed Thui lier, greatly agitated.

"Well, all I should say, which is perfectly true, is that I h not read a single line of your pamphlet. There is only o annoying feature about it—those damned juries hate beard so if I am to appear in court I must cut mine off."

"Come, my dear amphitryon, sit down again," said t editor-in-chief of the "Echo de la Bièvre," "we'll stand you; I have already written an article which will stir up a the peat-hawkers, and that honorable corporation is a pow

"No, gentlemen," said Thuillier, "a man like me cannot re a single half-hour under such an accusation. Continue wit out us. I hope soon to return to you. La Peyrade, are yo coming?"

"He is delightful!" said Barbet, after Thuillier and hi counsel had gone out. "To leave a breakfast after the oyster to go and talk with a figure-head. Come, gentlemen, close u the ranks," added he, enthusiastically.

"Stop," cried one of the half-starved journalists, who ha thrown a glance into the garden of the Palais-Royal, on whic the restaurant looked. "There is Barbanchu going by. Shal I ask him to come up?"

"Certainly," said Barbet junior, parodying an advertise ment, posted at the street corners, that everybody had rea "A father of a family desires a substitute."

"Barbanchu! Barbanchu!" cried the *soi-disant* (self-styled) journalist.

Barbanchu, a sugar-loaf hat on his head, was some time in

gnizing the cloud above, from which the voice spoke to

"Here!" cried the voice, which seemed angelic, when he d himself hailed by a man holding a glass of champagne s hand.

Then, as he appeared to hesitate, "Come up, my dear fellow! up!" they all cried in chorus, "there is a feast."

When Thuillier left the office of the court he could no longer lge illusions. He was under a most serious charge, and the e manner in which he had been received made him underd that when the trial came on he would be treated without ncy. Then he turned, as is the manner with accomplices things turn out wrongly, upon la Peyrade in the bitterest perations: He had paid no attention to what he was ng; he had given full rein to his stupid ideas on Saintonism; *he* didn't care about the consequences; *he* wouldn't to pay the fine or go to prison! Then, when la Peyrade the case did not seem serious to him, and that he looked an acquittal, Thuillier burst furiously upon him:

"Certainly! all is very simple," replied Thuillier, "monr sees nothing in it; all you can see is a chance for making nsational defence; but I shan't put my honor and fortune he hands of one of your ilk. I shall take some great barr, if the case comes to trial. I've had about enough of collaboration."

nder the injustice of these reproaches la Peyrade felt his er rising. At the same time he felt himself disarmed, and e did not wish to come to an open rupture with Thuillier, eft him, saying that he excused a man excited by fear, and ould wait upon him in the evening, when he would probbe calmer; at the same time, they would decide upon the s to be taken.

Accordingly, about four o'clock, the Provencal called at the e in the Place de la Madeleine. Thuillier was quieter, consternation, frightful despair, had taken its place. If ere expecting to be summoned to the scaffold half an hour r, he would not have appeared more crushed and cast down.

When the advocate entered, Madame Thuillier was occupied i making him take an infusion of lime-tree flowers. The po woman had come out from her usual apathy, and showed he self a veritable Eponine with this other Sabinus. As fo Brigitte, who soon appeared, bearing a foot-bath, she had n mercy in her speech; her bitter, virulent abuse, quite ou of proportion to the fault, supposing one to have been com mitted, would have irritated the most placid of men. La Pe rade felt that all was lost for him in the Thuillier household they seemed to hail with joy the chance for throwing him over On an ironical allusion by Brigitte to the manner in which h had decorated his friends, he rose and took his leave withou their making an effort to detain him.

After walking the streets awhile, the Provençal, in the midst of his indignation, had a thought of Madame de Godollo, and to tell the truth, since their last interview his thoughts ha often dwelt on the handsome foreigner. It was not once only when at the Thuilliers', that she left upon the arrival o Théodose. This scene was enacted whenever they met; and without knowing just what it indicated, la Peyrade had said to himself that this affectation of flight signified anything but indifference. After his first visit, to have paid her another visit immediately would have been anything but wise, but sufficient time had now elapsed to prove that he was master of himself. So he turned his steps back to the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and, without asking if the Countess was at home, he passed the lodge as if he was returning to the Thuilliers', and rang the bell of the entresol.

As before, he was asked to wait while the maid notified her mistress; but this time it was not in the dining-room; it was in a little library. He waited long. He did not know what to think. However, he reassured himself by saying that if he were to be excluded the deliberation would have been shorter; but finally the maid reappeared.

"Madame la Comtesse," said she, "is engaged on a business matter. Would monsieur be so kind as to wait? He might amuse himself with some of the books, as she would possibly be detained longer than she would like to be."

The excuse, in substance as well as in form, was not dis-
raging, and the advocate began to take the prescription
which had been given him against *ennui*. Without opening
of the sculptured rosewood cases, which contained a col-
tion of the most handsomely bound books he had ever seen,
a long claw-foot table covered with a green cloth he found
medley of books, which would furnish sufficient mental food
a man whose thoughts were likely to be otherwise em-
yed. But as he opened the volumes, one after another, he
cied that a Tantalus' feast was before him; one book was
English, another German, the next Russian, and one he
nd printed in Turkish characters. Was this a polyglot
e that she had arranged for him?

One volume at length arrested his attention. The binding,
noticed, unlike those of the other books, was not so rich as
tty. It lay by itself on a corner of the table. It was open,
back upward, and the edges of the leaves rested on the
en tablecloth like a tent. La Peyrade took it up, taking
to preserve the place which some one had evidently
rked. It proved to be a volume of the illustrated edition
Scribe's works. The engraving displayed was taken from a
ne at the Gymnase, entitled "The Hatred of a Woman."
v of our lady readers, doubtless, are ignorant of the plot
this piece, suggested, it is said, to the author of so many
ll masterpieces by a phrase caught one day from the lips of
concierge: "There are some people," said this woman,
o pretend to spit in the dish, in order to disgust other
ple, and have it all to *theirselves* (*eusse*)." The principal
onage of *la Haîne d'une Femme* is a young widow, who
sues with furious bitterness a poor young man who cannot
pe her. Apparently it is a hatred to the death. By her
ltries, she nearly destroys his reputation, and prevents
from contracting a very advantageous marriage. But in
nd she gives him more than she has taken from him, for
gives herself to him, and he who had been looked upon as
victim becomes her husband.

If it was chance that had placed this volume in its isolated

position it was open at the precise spot which seemed pertinent to what had passed between himself and the Countess—chance is at times adroit and clever. As he pondered over the deep meaning that this more or less fortuitous [illegible] might have, la Peyrade began to read [illegible] to [illegible] whether in detail, as in general drift, the allusions applied very closely to his situation. While he pursued this reading with an interest somewhat distracted by other thoughts, the sound of an opening door reached his ear, and he recognized the rather drawling voice of the Countess, who was accompanying some one to the door.

"I may say, then," said the voice of a man, "that you promise the Ambassadress that you will honor the ball with your presence this evening?"

"Yes, commander, if my somewhat mitigated headache will permit."

"*Au revoir,* then, my most adorable lady," said the voice of her interlocutor. Then the door closed and silence again reigned.

The title of commander somewhat reassured la Peyrade, for it is not in common used to young fops. He was curious enough to know who this person might be that had so long occupied the time of the Countess. As he did not hear any one approaching the library he went softly toward the window and carefully opened the curtain, prepared to drop it immediately if any sound was heard, and to "about face," and thereby avoid being surprised in the flagrant crime of curiosity. An elegant coupe, standing in waiting, which he had not noticed on entering, was drawn up to the door. A footman in dashing livery opened the door, and a little, dandified old man, one of those rare relics of the past who have not yet given up the use of powder, with a brisk, jaunty movement, stepped into the carriage, which was rapidly driven away. La Peyrade had opportunity to notice that his breast was covered with decorations. This, taken in connection with his powdered hair, gave evidence of a diplomatic personage.

La Peyrade had had time to resume his book, for in any

t it appeared advisable to be seen occupied with his read-
when the sound of the inner bell, followed quickly by the
rance of the maid, notified him that his long waiting was
end. Requested by the maid to follow her, the advocate
care not to replace the book in the position in which he
found it, and a moment later was in the presence of the
tess. There was a shade of pain lingering on the hand-
face of the stranger, but this did not detract from her
ms.

Beside her on the couch lay a gilt-edged letter in that free,
writing that betrays an official communication. In her
d was a crystal bottle with a gold stopper, from which she
led the odor of English toilet vinegar, which permeated
room.

"You are suffering, madame?" asked la Peyrade, with
ety.

"Oh! it is nothing," said the foreigner, "but a headache;
m subject to them. But you, monsieur, where have you
? I despaired of seeing you again. Have you some im-
ant news to make known to me? The date of your mar
to Mademoiselle Colleville must be sufficiently near to
ounce."

This opening slightly disconcerted la Peyrade.

"But, madame," he replied, almost sharply, "it seems to
hat you know everything that transpires in the Thuilliers'
sehold; you must therefore well know that the event of
ch you speak is not even a probability."

"No, I give you my word, I know nothing. I have strictly
e up my mind to take no further interest in an affair in
ch I very foolishly intermeddled. Madame Brigitte speaks
everything but Céleste's marriage."

"And it was doubtless a desire to leave me at full liberty in
affair which induced you to leave every time I had the honor
eet you in our friend's house."

"Yes," said the Countess, "that was sufficient reason for me
quit the place; otherwise why should I be so rude?"

"Oh, madame, there are many other reasons for a woman's

avoiding the presence of a man. For instance, if he has displeased her; if the advice which she has given him, with the best intentions, has not been received with the respect it deserved."

"Oh, my dear monsieur, I am not such an ardent proselytizer that I should be displeased with a person for not accepting my advice. I am as apt as other people to take a wrong view of things."

"On the contrary, madame, in the matter of my marriage, your judgment was correct."

"What?" said the Countess, eagerly. "Has the seizure of the pamphlet happening after Thuillier's failure to obtain the Cross led to a rupture?"

"No," said la Peyrade, "my influence in the Thuillier establishment rests on a more solid foundation. The services I have rendered mademoiselle and her brother quite outweigh these two checks, which happily are not irreparable."

"You think so?" interrupted the Countess, incredulously.

"Certainly," replied la Peyrade. "When Madame du Bruel seriously means to get the red ribbon she can do it in spite of all the obstacles that may be placed in her way."

The Countess received this assurance with a smile, and shook her head.

"But, madame, only a few days ago the Countess du Bruel told Madame Colleville that this unexpected resistance had wounded her self-respect, and that she would personally see the minister."

"You must surely forget that it is unusual to decorate a man who is under a summons of the court. It betokens a strong feeling against Thuillier, and perhaps against yourself, too; for you are the real culprit, which you do not seem to realize. The court, in this case, does not appear to have acted independently."

La Peyrade looked at the Countess.

"I must confess," replied he, after that rapid glance, "that I have vainly tried to find a single phrase in the whole work that would give cause for its seizure."

"It seems to me, too, that the King's people must have a vivid imagination to find anything seditious in the work," said the Countess. "And this proves the strength of the underground power which thwarts all your efforts in favor of this excellent Monsieur Thuillier."

"Perhaps you know our secret enemies?" said la Peyrade.

"Perhaps," said the Countess, smiling again.

"May I dare to venture a suspicion?" asked la Peyrade, considerably agitated.

"Speak," replied Mme. de Godollo; "I won't blame you if you guess aright."

"Well, madame, our enemies, Thuillier's and mine, are—a woman."

"Even so," said the Countess. "Know you how many lines of handwriting Richelieu needed before hanging a man?"

"Four," answered la Peyrade.

"You can then satisfy yourself that a pamphlet of two hundred pages can easily furnish a—well, say, a woman inclined to intriguing, with ground enough for prosecution."

"I understand it all, madame," cried la Peyrade excitedly. "I believe that this woman is highly gifted, that she is as malicious and as intelligent as Richelieu, an adorable magician that dominates the police and the gendarmes, and even more than that, she closes the hands of the ministers on the Cross ready to fall from them."

"Well, then," said the Countess, "what is the use of struggling against her?"

"I cease my struggle," said la Peyrade, estimating the extent of her regard for him by the pains she had taken on his account. Then, assuming an air of contrition:

"My God! madame," added he, "you must, indeed, hate me."

"Not to the extent that you imagine," replied the Countess; "but, after all, suppose that I do hate you?"

"Ah, madame," said la Peyrade exultantly, "I should then be the happiest of unfortunates; for this hate would be to me a thousand times more precious than your indifference. But you

hate me not. Why should you show to me that blessed feminine sentiment which is described by Scribe in one of his Gymnasium gems with such intelligence and delicacy?"

Mme. de Godollo made no immediate reply; she cast down her eyes, and her deep breathing gave a tremulous tone to her voice:

"The hate of a woman!" she replied, "could a man of your stoicism be disturbed by it?"

"Oh! yes, madame," answered la Peyrade, "I could be very much disturbed by it, but not to rebel against it; on the contrary, I bless the harshness that deigns to injure me. My beautiful enemy now known and confessed, I shall not despair of touching her heart, for I will never again tread a path that is not hers; never will I march under any banner that she has not made her own. In everything I will be her auxiliary, her slave; if she repulses me with her darling foot, punishes me with her white hand, I will endure it with pleasure. For all this submission and obedience I will crave but one favor—that I may kiss the print of the foot that spurns me, of bathing with tears the hand that is raised to strike me."

During this long outcry of a transported and distracted heart, which the joy of anticipated triumph had wrung from the impressible nature of the Provençal, he had glided from his chair, and at the end found himself on one knee before the Countess in the conventional attitude of the stage, but which is far more common in real life than most people think.

"Rise, monsieur," said the Countess, "and please answer me."

Then, giving him a questioning gaze beneath the lovely, frowning eyebrows:

"Have you carefully weighed," said she, "the meaning of what you have just said? Have you gauged the pledge, and plumbed its depths? Your hand on your heart and conscience, are you the man to redeem this promise; are you not one of the falsely humble and perfidious men who only affect to embrace our knees to make us the more easily lose our balance, both of will and reason?"

"I!" exclaimed la Peyrade; "never can I resist the fascinations which enthralled me at our first interview. Ah, madame, the more I have resisted and fought against this sentiment, the more strongly should you believe in its sincerity and its final control over me. I have said aloud to-day what my heart has said from the moment I had the honor to be received by you, and the weary days that I have passed in struggling against my enthrallment have given me a firm will, which has reckoned with itself, and which even your severity will not cast down."

"Severity, that is possible," said the Countess, "but you ought also to think of the kindness; we foreign women do not understand the levity with which your Frenchwomen enter upon the most solemn engagement. With us yes is a sacred bond; our word is our act. We do nothing by halves. In the arms of my family there is a device which has a great significance here: ALL OR NOTHING. This is saying a great deal, but it is not enough."

"That is the understanding I have of my pledge," replied the barrister; "my first step on leaving you will be to go and put an end to that ignoble past which for a moment I seemed to weigh against the intoxicating future which you have not forbidden me to hope for."

"No," said the Countess, "do it calmly and with due thought. I shouldn't like to see you lose your head and going about smashing window-panes. The Thuilliers are not such bad folk at the bottom; they humiliated you without knowing it; their world is not yours. Is that their fault? Untie the knot, don't break it, and above all take time for reflection. Your conversion to my belief is of very recent date. What man can be sure what his heart will say to-morrow?"

"I, madame," said la Peyrade, "am that man. We men of the South do not love in the French fashion."

"But I thought," said the Hungarian, with a charming smile, "that our discussion was on hatred."

"Ah, madame, even when explained and understood that word hurts me; tell me rather, not that you love me, but that

the words you deigned to bestow upon me at our first meeting are the true expression of your thought."

"My friend," replied the Countess, accenting the word, "one of your moralists says: 'There are those who say: *this is* or *this is not;* such need take no oath,—their character swears for them', do me the honor of counting me among such people." As she spoke she held out her hand with a modest and graceful gesture. La Peyrade, quite beside himself, seized it, and rapturously kissed it.

"That will do, child," said the foreigner, gently disengaging her imprisoned hand. "Adieu for the present. I believe my headache has left me."

La Peyrade took up his hat, and was about to rush from the room; but, stopping at the door, he returned, and bestowed upon the beautiful foreigner a look full of tenderness. The Countess waved him a charming adieu; and as la Peyrade seemed inclined to turn back, she cautioned him with her finger to be wiser, and to remain where he was.

On the stairs la Peyrade stopped to exhale, one might say, the happiness with which his heart was overflowing. The words of the Countess, the ingenious preparations she had taken to indicate to him her real sentiments, appeared to him so many guaranties of her sincerity, and he left her with full faith.

A prey to that intoxication of happiness which betrays itself in gesture, gait, sometimes also in acts not justified strictly by good judgment, after stopping for a moment on the stairway he ascended a few steps, and from a position where he had a good view of the Thuilliers' apartments, he cried:

"At last I have fame, fortune, happiness; more than all, I can give myself the pleasure of revenge. After Dutocq and Cérizet I will crush you, vile bourgeois brood!" and he shook his fist at the innocent double-door. Then he went off running, and at this moment the popular expression was true of him, "The earth could not hold him."

The next day, the tempest heaving in his breast, la Peyrade went to see Thuillier in the most hostile mood. How amazed he became when, as soon as Thuillier saw him, he threw himself into his arms.

"My friend," said the ex-sub-chief, "my political fortune is made; every paper without exception speaks this morning of the pamphlet being seized; you should see how the Opposition sheets attack the government."

"That is very simple," said the advocate, without sharing this enthusiasm. "You have become a stalking-horse for them, and this will not help you any. The court will be all the more eager to have you convicted."

"Very well," said Thuillier, proudly. "I will go to prison, like Béranger, like Lamennais, like Armand Carrel."

"My dear fellow, that is all very charming at a distance; but when the iron bolts close on you, you may be very sure that the situation will not seem so agreeable."

"In the first place," objected Thuillier, "a political prisoner will never be denied the privilege of serving his time in an asylum. Moreover, I have not yet been condemned. You yourself told me yesterday that there was hope for an acquittal."

"Yes; but I have learned something since which renders that result very doubtful. You have an enemy who is working against you; the same hand that prevented your getting the Cross is the one that seized your pamphlet; you are being assassinated by premeditation."

"Then if this dangerous enemy is known to you, why don't you unmask him to me?" said Thuillier.

"I don't know, but I have suspicions," replied la Peyrade; "this is what you get by playing such a deep game."

"How! a deep game?" said the simple Thuillier, who well knew he had nothing of the kind with which to reproach himself.

"Certainly," replied the barrister. "You have used Céleste as a kind of decoy-duck in your salon; everybody has not the magnanimity of Monsieur Godeschal, who, after he had been dismissed, so generously forgave you and managed that business of the house."

"Explain yourself," said Thuillier; "I can't yet comprehend."

"Nothing is easier to be understood. Without counting me, how many pretenders have you had to Céleste's hand? Godeschal, Minard junior, young Phellion, Olivier Vinet the substitute,—all men who have had their walking-tickets as I have."

"Oliver Vinet, the substitute!" exclaimed Thuillier, struck with a new light; "that's the one, of course, that caused this blow. His father, they say, has a very long arm. But it cannot be said that we have given him his walking-ticket, to use your very unsuitable expression. He spent an evening with us, but made no advances; neither did Minard's son, nor Phellion's son. Godeschal was the only one who ventured a direct overture, and he was refused promptly, and was not kept in suspense."

"Quite true," said la Peyrade, looking for a new ground of quarrel. "It is only those who speak out boldly and definitely that are trifled with."

"Now what are you aiming at by those insinuations? Didn't you properly settle everything with Brigitte the other day? It's a nice time to bother me about your love affairs while the sword of justice hangs over my head."

"Oh! that's it," said la Peyrade, ironically; "so you are going to make the most of your position as a political martyr. I knew how it would be when your pamphlet came out—the old cry of not getting out of me all that you expected!"

"*Parbleu!* your pamphlet," replied Thuillier. "You seem to be pleased at the idea of its removing my difficulties, when, on the contrary, it has occasioned deplorable complications."

"Deplorable! in what way. Your political fortune is made."

"Truly, my dear sir, I should never have thought that you would choose the hour of adversity to put your pistol at my throat, and make me the object of your raillery and malice."

"Indeed, now," said la Peyrade, "this is the hour of your adversity! Yet a moment ago you threw yourself into my arms as a man to whom a signal stroke of good fortune had come. You must take your stand, either as a man to be pitied, or a triumphant conqueror."

"You are inclined to be witty," replied Thuillier; "but you cannot put me in the wrong. I have common sense, if I am not brilliant. It is very natural that I should be relieved at seeing public opinion pronounce in my favor, and in receiving from the press the most honorable testimonies of its deep sympathy. But, after all, do you not think that I should have preferred that the affair had taken its natural course? and in finding myself the object of a malignant revenge on the part of people as influential as the Vinets, can I measure the extent of the dangers to which I am exposed?"

"Then," said la Peyrade, with a pitiless insistence, "you are decidedly a 'weeping John'?"

"Yes," replied Thuillier in a solemn tone, "a John who weeps over a friendship that I had believed to be true and devoted, and which has only sarcasms to offer me when I expected services."

"What services?" asked la Peyrade. "Did you not say yesterday that you would not accept my assistance under any circumstances? You said when I offered to defend you that you would employ a great barrister."

"Yes, in the first shock of surprise at such an unexpected blow, I may have used such a foolish expression. But, upon reflection, who is better able than yourself to explain the meaning of the work of your own pen? Yesterday I was beside myself; to-day you, with your wounded self-esteem, cannot pardon an act done on the impulse of the moment. You are a very caustic and cruel man."

"Well," said la Peyrade, "you formally ask me to defend you before the jury?"

"Yes, my dear sir. I know of no one else into whose hands I can put my cause. I might pay some grand gentleman of the palace an exorbitant fee, and he would not defend me so skilfully as you would."

"Well, I refuse to do anything of the kind. Things have changed. Yesterday I thought as you do—that I was the man for this trial. I see to-day that you had better get some leader of the bar, because, with Vinet's antagonism taking on such

proportions, whoever undertakes your defence will assume a fearful responsibility."

"I understand," said Thuillier, sarcastically; "monsieur has an eye on the magistracy and does not want to quarrel with one who is spoken of as keeper of the seals. Quite prudent, quite; still I don't think it will help on your marriage."

"That is to say," said la Peyrade, catching the ball on its rebound, "that to get you out of the clutches of the jury is the thirteenth labor of Hercules that you would impose upon me to gain the hand of Mademoiselle Colleville. I fully expected that the exigencies would multiply in proportion to my devotion. But just that same thing has worn me out; and to cut short this exploitation of one man by another, I have come here this morning to give you back your word. You may dispose of Céleste's hand as you see fit; so far as I am concerned, I am no longer a suitor."

This abrupt and unexpected declaration left Thuillier speechless, the more so as at that moment Brigitte entered. Her animosity had declined; she greeted him with amicable familiarity:

"Ah! there you are," said she to la Peyrade, "you sad scamp of a barrister!"

"Mademoiselle, I salute you," gravely responded the Provençal.

"Well," she went on, not paying any attention to la Peyrade's ceremonious manner, "the government has got itself in a fine pickle by seizing your pamphlet. You should just see how the morning papers go for it. Here," she added, passing to Thuillier a small sheet printed on sugar-paper, in coarse type and scarcely legible, "this is one that you've not yet seen; the porter has just brought it up; this is the journal of our old quarter, the 'Écho de la Bièvre.' I do not know, gentlemen, if you agree with me, but I doubt if a better article could be written; it's queer though how careless these journalists are; they write your name without the *h*—you ought to complain about it."

Thuillier took the journal and read the article, which had

been inspired by the gratitude of the editor-in-chief of the tanner's journal, in return for a well-filled stomach.

Never before had Brigitte troubled about the papers except to see whether they might be of a proper size in which to wrap a package; but now, suddenly converted to a devotee of the press, under the influence of sisterly affection, she stood behind Thuillier, and read over his shoulder the passages on the page which had appeared so eloquent to her, and pointed them out with her finger.

"Yes," said Thuillier, refolding the paper, "that's pretty warm, besides being very flattering to me. But there is another very important matter: monsieur, here present, has come to inform me that he will not plead for me, and that he is no longer a claimant for Céleste's hand."

"That is, he means," said Brigitte, "that he won't take on the case unless he is married out of hand as soon as it is over. Well, it seems only reasonable, poor man. When he has done that there should not be any further delay; and whether she is pleased or not, Mademoiselle Céleste must accept him; everything must have an end."

"You hear, my dear sir," said la Peyrade, seizing upon Brigitte's commentary; "when I have pleaded, the wedding comes. Your sister is frankness itself; she is not the least diplomatic."

"Diplomatic!" exclaimed Brigitte. "I am not the one to go poking round. I say what I think. The workman has done his work; he should be paid for it."

"Be silent," cried Thuillier, stamping his foot. "Every word you speak twists the dagger in the wound."

"What! the dagger in the wound; you have fallen out, then?"

"I have told you," said Thuillier, "that la Peyrade returns us our pledges; he claims that we are asking another service of him for Céleste's hand; he thinks he has done quite enough as it is."

"He has done us some service, undoubtedly," replied Brigitte; "we are not ungrateful to him. At the same time, it

was he that caused you the trouble. It seems only fair th he should get you out of it."

"There might be some sense of justice in your remarks answered la Peyrade, "if I were the only barrister in Pari but as the streets are paved with them, and as Thuillier hin self spoke yesterday of employing a distinguished advocat I had not the least scruple in refusing to defend him. Nov as to the marriage, as I don't intend being made the obje of any further brutal bargaining, I am here to renounce it i the most formal manner, and nothing now prevents Céles accepting Monsieur Phellion with all his numerous advar tages."

"At your pleasure, my dear monsieur," replied Brigitt "if that is your last word. We shall be at no loss in findin a husband for Céleste, either Phellion's son or some one els But the reason you give is not the real one. We can't danc faster than the fiddlers go; even if the marriage should b decided upon to-day, the banns have to be published; yo have sense enough to know that no wedding can take place til all formalities have been complied with, and long before the Thuillier's trial will be over."

"Yes," said la Peyrade, "and if I lose the case it will be who will have sent him to prison, as it was I yesterday wh caused him to be arrested."

"Well, it does seem to me that if you hadn't written some thing there would be nothing to bite at by the police."

"My dear Brigitte," interposed Thuillier, who had note la Peyrade shrug his shoulders, "your reasoning is false; ther was nothing indictable in the pamphlet; it is not la Peyrade's fault if persons high in station are conspiring against us You remember that little deputy, Monsieur Olivier Vinet that Cardot brought to one of our receptions. It seems that he and his father are furious because we would not bestow Céleste upon him, and they have sworn to destroy me."

"Well, what other reason than monsieur's fine eyes had we for refusing him?" said Brigitte. "After all, a deputy of Paris is a very desirable catch."

"Undoubtedly," said la Peyrade, nonchalantly; "only you see he didn't bring you a million!"

"Ah!" said Brigitte, flaming up, "if you are going to talk again about the house you got us to buy, I don't mind telling you pretty plainly that if you had had the money yourself necessary to trick the notary out of it, you wouldn't have come to us. And you need not think, either, that I have been wholly your dupe. You talk of bargains; but you certainly proposed the matter yourself. Give me Céleste, and I will give you the house; that is what you said in plain terms. Besides, we've had to pay more than you said it would cost."

"Come, now, Brigitte," said Thuillier, "don't speak of trifles."

"Trifles! trifles!" repeated Brigitte. "Did we pay more than we expected, or didn't we?"

"My dear Thuillier," said la Peyrade, "I believe as you do, that the question is settled, and that it will only increase the bitterness to keep up these useless recriminations. I had made up my mind before I came here, and all that has been said has only confirmed my decision. I will not be your son-in-law, but we can remain good friends, nevertheless." And he rose to take his leave.

"One moment, monsieur," said Brigitte, barring his way; "there is one matter yet unsettled; if we are to have nothing more in common, perhaps you will be so good as to inform me what became of that ten thousand francs given you by Thuillier to bribe those scoundrels of government officials to get that Cross of which we have yet heard nothing."

"Brigitte," cried Thuillier with anguish, "you have the tongue of a devil; you learned that from me once when I was in a bad humor, and you promised you would never mention it again."

"No; but," replied the implacable Brigitte, "we are breaking up; when people break up they should settle up—pay their debts. Ten thousand francs! a real Cross is dear enough at that price; but for a Cross in the clouds, monsieur will admit the price is rather high."

"See here, la Peyrade, my friend," said Thuillier, going to the advocate, who was pale with rage, "pay no attention Brigitte. Her affection for me upsets her. I know what partment offices are, and I should not be surprised if you paid out some of your own money."

"Monsieur," said la Peyrade, "I am not prepared to stantly return you the amount which has been so insolen demanded. But should you be pleased to grant me some lit delay and accept my note, why- —"

"To the devil with a note," said Thuillier, "you owe nothing; in fact, by what Cardot said, we are indebted to yo he said we ought to have given you not less than ten thousa francs for the magnificent property you enabled us to quire."

"Cardot! Cardot!" said Brigitte, "he is very generous wi other people's money. We were giving monsieur Célest that's better than ten thousand francs.'

La Peyrade was too fine a comedian not to find, in the h miliation which he had just experienced, an occasion for theatrical climax. With tears in his voice, which soon moi ened his eyes,—

"Mademoiselle," said he, "when I had the honor of bei received by you, I was poor; you saw me accept every indigni with forbearance, for I knew what poverty must underg From the day on which I was able to bring you the fortu which I did not seek for myself I felt more assurance, a your kindness itself encouraged me to banish my timidity a self-abasement. To-day when I take a loyal step, which r lieves you of great anxiety,—for, if you would be frank yo would confess that you had dreamed of another husband f Céleste,—we could renounce a project which my sense of del cacy forbids me to pursue, and still remain friends. It is on necessary to keep within the limits of that courtesy, of whic you have a model every day before your eyes; for althoug Madame de Godollo is not very friendly to me, I am sure tha her good-breeding would not allow her to approve of you outrageous insults. Thank heaven, I have in my heart son

igious sentiment; the gospel to me is not a dead letter, so, understand me, *I forgive you.* I shall not offer to Thuil- who would refuse to accept them, the ten thousand francs, h you believe me to have appropriated to my own use, but u, as my only revenge. If at that time you feel how un- your suspicions were and should scruple to keep the ney, you can hand it over to the Bureau of Benevo- ce——"

"To the Bureau of Benevolence!" cried Brigitte, interrupt- l m; "thank you. What! to be distributed to a crowd of keting do-nothings, who gorge themselves after 'eating od Lord' (*après avoir été manger le bon Dieu*). I've n poor myself, my boy; I made bags for people to put y in before I'd any of my own; now that I've got I mean to keep it; so, whenever you're ready I'll receive en thousand francs and keep it, too. If you didn't know er than to fire off your powder at sparrows, why so much e worse for you."

La Peyrade saw that he had missed his aim and had not the slightest degree impressed Brigitte's granite; he cast di-dainful look at her and went out majestically. He no- ed a movement on the part of Thuillier to detain him, but imperious gesture of Brigitte, always queen and mistress, d nailed her brother to his place. Arriving at his own e the barrister completed his emancipation by writing Mme. Colleville that, the marriage with Céleste being broken off, he thought propriety required his abstaining from siting her house for the future.

The next day Colleville, on the way to his office, called on Peyrade and asked what "stupidity" he had written Flavie, t had plunged her into despair. The barrister with the most gravity reproduced a copy for the husband; it was tainly not a love letter that had been sent to his wife.

"And so that is what you call being a friend?" said Colle- lle, who for a long time had familiarly *thou'd* the Provençal. You don't wish to marry—but is that any reason for break- with the girl's parents? Are we responsible for your quar-

rel with Thuillier? Is this the regard you profess for us? Has not my wife always treated you kindly?"

"I have never been received but with the utmost kindness and the greatest consideration by Madame Colleville," replied la Peyrade.

"And so for this you would let her die of grief? Since yesterday she has not laid down her handkerchief; I tell you she will be really ill."

"Listen to me, my dear Colleville," replied la Peyrade. "I owe you the truth, and you are worthy to hear it. Aside from the fact that I cannot now meet Mademoiselle Céleste——"

"Well, you need not meet her," interrupted the good Colleville. "When you come here, the little one will run off to her room. Besides, she will soon be married."

"Very well; but I ought to add that my visits to your house have occasioned talk. Malicious stories have been circulated, and it is my desire, as well as my duty, to put a stop to them."

"What!" exclaimed the husband, "you desire to stop this talk, a man of your intelligence taking notice of such stuff! Why, my wife has been talked about for five and twenty years, and only because she happens to be better looking than Madame Thuillier or Brigitte! I must be a most stoical Greek than you, for this tittle-tattle has not caused a quarter of an hour's uneasiness in our household."

"I admire your strength of mind, but it is rash to go against public opinion."

"Absurd!" said Colleville; "I trample underfoot this public opinion, the prostitute! Minard has done this gossiping, all because his fat cook of a wife has never attracted the attention of any decent man. He had better look after his son, who is ruining himself with an old actress at the Bobino."

"Well, my dear friend," said la Peyrade, "try to bring back Flavie to her senses."

"That is better," said Colleville, vigorously shaking the hand of the barrister; "you call her Flavie as of old; I have recovered my friend."

"Certainly," replied la Peyrade, in a calmer tone, "friends are always friends."

"Yes, friends are friends," repeated Colleville; "friendship is a present from the gods, and consoles us for all the crosses of life. I understand, then, that you will call upon my wife and restore peace and serenity to our unhappy home."

La Peyrade made a vague promise and wondered whether this kind of husband—a type more numerous than is supposed—was an actor or genuine.

At the moment when la Peyrade was about laying the freedom he had recovered in such a rude manner at the feet of the Countess, he received a perfumed note which made his heart beat. He recognized on the seal the famous ALL OR NOTHING, which was to govern the relations between them.

"Dear Monsieur," said Mme. de Godollo, "I have heard of your determination,—thank you! But now I must arrange for my own; I cannot, you must see, continue to reside in a sphere so far from that of ours, and where no interest detains me longer. To make this arrangement so as to avoid explanations for the reason why the entresol welcomes the voluntary exile from the first floor, I shall need to-day and to-morrow for myself. Therefore, do not call to see me until the following day. By that time I shall have executed Brigitte, as they say on the Bourse, and have much to tell you.

"Tua tota,

"COMTESSE DE GODOLLO."

That "wholly thine" in Latin seemed charming to la Peyrade; it did not astonish him, however, for he knew that with the Hungarians Latin was almost a second national language.

The two days' waiting to which he had been condemned added fuel to the fierce flame of passion which had taken possession of him; and the next day, on arriving at the house de la Madeleine, his love had reached a height of incandescence, which he would have considered impossible a few days previous.

This time la Peyrade was seen by the concierge's wife, but in addition to the fact that he might be supposed to be going

to Thuillier's, he was very indifferent as to whether the tru object of his visit might be known or not. The ice once broken his happiness was assured, and he was rather disposed to pro claim it abroad than to make a mystery of it. Running quickly up the stairs the advocate was about to ring the bell when, reaching out his hand to take the silk cord near the door, he noticed that the cord had disappeared.

La Peyrade's first thought was that one of those serious ill nesses which render all kinds of noise insupportable to a sick person might explain the removal of the missing object; bu many other tokens came at the same moment to invalidate this explanation, which, moreover, would not have been very consoling. From the vestibule to the Countess' door a stair carpet, fastened at each step by a copper rod, furnished visitors an easy ascent. This carpet had been removed.

In front of the door a screen, covered with green velvet and held up by gilded rods, shut in the recess. Nothing remained of this arrangement, except some marks made in the wall by the workmen who had removed it. For a moment he thought, in his excitement that he had mistaken the floor; but, glancing over the baluster, he assured himself that he had not crossed the entresol. Madame de Godollo, then, was about to move.

The Provençal resigned himself to announce his visit to the grand lady in the same manner as if he were calling upon a grisette. But under his hand a hollow sound echoed, which emphasized the vacancy *intonuere cavernæ*, and at the same time under the door, upon which he vainly rapped with his knuckles, he observed that clear light which gives evidence of an unoccupied apartment, where no curtains, or carpet, or furniture deadens the sound and softens the light.

Forced to believe that the Countess had actually moved, la Peyrade supposed that as a result of the rupture with Brigitte, some insolence of the old maid had compelled this radical and violent measure; but why had he not been notified of it? and what an idea to place him in the ridiculous position called by the vulgar by the picturesque appellation of "meeting a

wooden face"! Being determined to fully satisfy himself, before going, he made a furious assault upon the door.

"Who's that hammering at the door as if he wanted to pull down the house?" shouted the janitor, attracted to the foot of the stairs by the noise.

"Does Madame de Godollo not reside here still?" asked la Peyrade.

"Certainly she doesn't live here now, since she's left. Had monsieur told me he was seeking her, I would have spared him the trouble of battering down the door."

"I knew she was about leaving this suite," said la Peyrade, not wishing to appear ignorant of her design to move, "but I did not think she was going so soon."

"I think it must have been done in a hurry," said the janitor, "since she went off early this morning with post-horses."

"Post-horses!" repeated la Peyrade, stupefied; "then has she quit Paris?"

"Well, people don't usually go post from one quarter of Paris to another," said the terrible porter.

"Did she say where she was going?"

"What a droll idea, monsieur; do such folk give any account of themselves to the like of us?"

"But if any letter came for her after her departure?"

"I have orders to give her letters to Monsieur le Commandant, the little old man who visited her so often, and whom monsieur must have met here."

"Yes, yes, certainly," said la Peyrade, preserving his presence of mind under the succession of blows he had received, "that little old man in powder, who came nearly every day."

"Not every day, but he came very often. Well, I have received orders to give him the letters of Madame la Comtesse."

"And she gave you no instructions for her other acquaintances?" said the Provençal, indifferently.

"None, monsieur."

"Very well, my dear madame," said la Peyrade, "I thank you."

And he started to go out.

"But I think," said the concierge's wife, "that mademo selle ought to know more about it than I do. Isn't monsie going up? She is at home, as well as Monsieur Thuillier."

"No," said la Peyrade, "that would be useless. I came give Madame de Godollo an account of a matter which s had intrusted to me. I have no time to stop."

"Well, I tell you she went off this morning by post. Tw hours ago monsieur would have found her here; but havi gone by post, she must be a long way from here now."

With her habit of saying everything over twice, this woma who had just given the Provencal such cruel informatio seemed to insist upon details which gave him the keene torture. He went away with despair in his heart. Aside fro his anguish at this hasty departure, jealousy had taken po session of him. And in this bitter hour of his dire disappoin ment the most grievous explanations presented themselves his mind. After some reflection he said to himself:

"These female diplomats are often charged with importa secret missions, where absolute discretion is necessary and t utmost rapidity of motion required."

Here a sudden revulsion of feeling came over him:

"But suppose she is but an adventuress, one of those em ployed by foreign governments as secret agents? Suppo that the story of the Russian princess, more or less likel being obliged to sell her furniture to Brigitte is also that this Hungarian lady? But yet," added he, as his brain, in fearful whirl of ideas and sentiments, made a third revolutio "her education, manners, speech, everything, proclaim her woman of the highest position; then, besides, if she were but bird of passage, why take such pains to win me over?"

La Peyrade might have continued his pleading, for an against, for a much longer time, if he had not felt himse suddenly seized by the shoulders by a strong arm, while voice he well knew cried:

"My dear barrister, look out! a frightful danger menac you; you are running into it headlong."

La Peyrade turned round to find himself in Phellion's arms. This scene took place in front of a house in process of demoli-n, on the corner of Rues Duphot and Saint-Honoré.

Posted on the sidewalk in front of it, Phellion, who, it will remembered d a decided penchant for building opera-s, for a qu ter of an hour had been watching the drama of a piece of wall ready to fall under the combined efforts of ng of workmen, and, watch in his hand, the great citizen calculating the length of time this mass of stone and rtar would resist the work of destruction of which it was object.

It was precisely at the moment of most imminent peril, n la Peyrade, lost in the tumult of his thoughts, and ob-us to the warnings addressed to him from all sides, was t to cross the orbit of the falling *aërolite*. Seen by Phel-—who, however, would have rushed forward with equal te for a stranger—la Peyrade undoubtedly owed to him escape from a frightful death; for at the moment when he l been pulled back by the vigorous grasp of the inhabitant the Latin Quarter, the wall, with the report of a cannon-t, and in the midst of a cloud of dust, came crashing down few feet from him.

"Are you deaf and blind?" roared the man employed to rn the passers-by, in a tone that may be imagined.

"Thanks, my dear monsieur," said la Peyrade, "I should ve been *crased* like an idiot only for you." And he pressed Phellion's hand.

"My reward," replied Phellion, "is in the satisfaction of owing that you are saved from imminent danger. I may l that the gratification is increased by a certain pride, for I s not mistaken by two seconds in the time I had reckoned n for the instant when the centre of gravity of that for-lable mass would be displaced. But of what were you nking, my dear sir? Perhaps of the plea you are to make the Thuillier case; for I have learned from the journals of menace that the vindictive public holds over the head of estimable friend. You have a noble cause to defend, mon-

sieur. With my hand on my conscience, and accustome moreover, as I am, by my duties as a member of the readi committee of the Odéon to judge of productions of t mind, having become acquainted with some passages of t incriminating document, I can find nothing in this pamphl of a nature to justify the rigorous measures of which it h been made the object. Between you and me," added the gre citizen, lowering his voice, "I think it a mean action on t part of the government."

"I am of the same opinion," said la Peyrade, "but I a not charged with the defence. I have advised Thuillier to r tain some famous advocate."

"That may be good advice," said Phellion. "At any rat it does honor to your modesty. You have doubtless seen ou good friend? Poor man, I called to see him when th blow fell. I am on my way to see him now; he was not a home on my first visit. I saw only Brigitte, who was con versing with Madame de Godollo; that is a woman who pos sesses strong political views. It appears that she predicte that the seizure would occur."

"Did you know that the Countess had left Paris?" said l Peyrade, seizing the opportunity of broaching the subject o his temporary monomania.

"Ah! she has gone," said Phellion. "Well, monsieur, I must tell you that though there was little sympathy betwee you and her, yet I look upon her departure as a misfortune she leaves a serious void in the salon of our friends; I say thi because I think it, I am not used to disguise my feelings."

"Yes," said la Peyrade, "she is a most distinguished wo man; I think, in spite of her prejudices against me, that w should have come eventually to an understanding; but thi morning she hastily left by post without leaving word wher she was going."

"Post!" exclaimed Phellion. "I don't know whether mon sieur agrees with me, but I think traveling post is most agree able. It is certain that Louis XI., to whom we owe this insti tution, had in this instance a very happy thought; al-

though in other matters his sanguinary and despotic rule was not, to my way of thinking, quite devoid of reproach. Only once in my life have I so traveled, but I may truly say that I found it far superior, in spite of its inferiority in speed, to the mad rush of the iron roads or 'railways,' where speed is acquired at the cost of safety and the taxpayer."

La Peyrade paid but small attention to Phellion's phraseology. "Whither has she gone?" This was the one question which absorbed all his thoughts, a preoccupation which would have rendered him indifferent to a much more interesting narration. But the great citizen, off like a locomotive, continued:

"It was at the time of Madame Phellion's last confinement. She was at Perche with her mother, when I learned that serious complications had ensued, together with milk-fever. A wound in the pocket is never fatal, as they say; so, overwhelmed with terror at the danger threatening my wife, I at once proceeded to the coach-office to obtain a seat in the coach; all were taken, and had been for a week in advance. My mind was at once made up. I went to the Rue Pigalle, and, paying gold down on the spot, I obtained a chaise and two horses; but unfortunately I had neglected the formality of a passport, without which, by the decrees of the consulate of 17 Nivôse of the year XII., they are not allowed to deliver horses to a traveler——"

The last words were a flash of light to la Peyrade: without the finish of the posting Odyssey, he started off at once in the direction of the Rue Pigalle before Phellion, with his sentence in the air, had time to realize his departure. Arrived at the establishment of the royal post, la Peyrade wondered of whom he might best inquire to obtain the desired information. He explained to the porter that he wished to send a very important letter to a lady of his acquaintance; that this lady had neglected to leave her address, and he thought he might possibly learn it by means of the passport which must have been presented in order to obtain horses.

"Did this lady traveler have a maid with her, and whom I

picked up near the Madeleine," said a postilion, who sat
a corner of the room.

"Exactly," said la Peyrade, advancing eagerly to this pr
dentially sent man, and slipping a crown of a hundred s
into his hand.

"She's a droll sort of a traveler," said the postilion; "
told me to take her to the Bois de Boulogne, there she m
me drive around for an hour; then we came back to the Bar
de l'Étoile, where she gave me a good tip and got into a ha
telling me to take the chaise to the man she had hired it fr
on the Cour des Coches, Faubourg St. Honoré."

"The name of the man?" demanded la Peyrade.

"Sieur Simonin," replied the postilion.

Armed with this information, la Peyrade started off aga
and in a quarter of an hour was questioning the livery-sta
keeper; that individual could only say that a lady living
the Place de la Madeleine had hired a post-chaise, withe
horses, for half a day; that the post-chaise had been sent
her at nine o'clock in the morning; and that before mide
it was in the stable again, brought back by a postilion of
royal post.

"Never mind," said la Peyrade, "I am certain that she h
not left Paris, and is not avoiding me; most likely she uses t
pretended journey to utterly break with the Thuilliers. F
that I am, a letter assuredly awaits me at my home to info
me of all."

Worn out with excitement and fatigue, and to verify m
promptly the truth of his presentiment, la Peyrade threw hi
self into a cab, and in less than a quarter of an hour—for
had promised a large tip—he was in the Rue Saint-Dominiq
d'Enfer. There he had to submit to the torture of waiti
Since Brigitte had left the house, the service of "Sieu
Coffinet, the porter, had been very negligently performed; a
when la Peyrade rushed to the lodge to get *his* letter, whi
he thought he saw in the box assigned to his use, he fou
Coffinet and his wife absent, and their door carefully fastene
The woman was busy in household work, and Coffine

taking advantage of the fact, had allowed himself to be enticed into a neighboring wine-shop, where between two glasses, maintained, against a republican who spoke contemptuously of them, the cause of the proprietors.

It was over twenty minutes before this worthy janitor remembered that he had certain "property" confided to him and returned to his post. One can figure to himself the deluge of reproaches with which la Peyrade saluted him. He excused himself by saying that he had gone to execute a pressing commission entrusted to him by *Mademoiselle*, and that he could not be in two places at once, and finally handed the advocate a letter which bore the Paris postmark. Rather with his heart than his eyes the Provençal recognized the writing; the arms and the motto, when he turned the missive over, confirmed the hope that he had reached the end of the cruelest emotion he had ever experienced.

To read this letter before the janitor were profanation; by a delicacy of feeling which all lovers will understand, he did himself the pleasure of deferring his happiness; he would not even break the seal of that so precious missive until, safe behind his own closed door, he could revel to his heart's content in the ravishments it promised.

Flying up the stair, two steps at a time, the amorous Provençal had the childishness to turn the key in the door; then, installed before his desk, he, with pious dexterity, broke the seal; it seemed as if his heart would leap from his breast.

"Dear monsieur," was written, "I disappear forever, for my rôle is played out. I give you my thanks for having rendered it as pleasant as it was easy. By embroiling you with the Thuilliers and Collevilles, who are now fully informed as to your sentiments about them, and having taken great care to expatiate to extravagant lengths, in a manner most mortifying to their bourgeois self-conceit, on the real cause of your sudden and ruthless rupture with them, I am proud and happy to say that I have rendered you a most signal service. girl does not love you, and you only love the beautiful

eyes of her *dot*. So I have saved both of you from a hell. exchange for the one to whom you aspired, another is destin for you; she is richer, more beautiful than Mlle. Collevil and, speaking for myself, in conclusion, much freer than

"Your very unworthy servant,

"*Wife* TORNA, COMTESSE DE GODOLLO.

"P. S.—For further information, apply without delay M. du Portail, gentleman, Rue Honoré-Chevalier, near t Rue Cassette, quarter of Saint-Sulpice, who is expecting yo

When he had finished the letter, the advocate of the po put his head in his hands; he saw nothing, heard nothi thought nothing; he was annihilated.

Several days were necessary to la Peyrade before he cou recover the shock. The blow, in fact, was a terrible or coming out of that golden dream in which he had seen perspective of the future in such a radiant atmosphere, found himself the victim of a hoax which wounded him m severely in his self-conceit and all his pretensions to cunni and cleverness; broken with the Thuilliers irrevocably; load with a debt of twenty-five thousand francs, though not i mediately due; and also, to save his own dignity, engaged pay Brigitte another ten thousand francs without delay; complete all, he felt that he was not radically cured of passionate feelings for the feminine author of this great d aster and the instrument of his ruin.

Either this Delilah was a very grand lady, high enough station to permit her to give rein to the most compromisi caprices,—in which case she had played the rôle of gra coquette in a game where he himself had had the rôle clown,—or she was a most accomplished adventuress, in t pay of that du Portail, and the agent of his matrimonial triguing. Thus, a bad life or an evil heart, was the choice judgments to be passed upon this dangerous siren, and either case it might seem that the regrets of her victim wou not be very acute.

But put yourself in the place of this child of Provence, with boiling blood and hot-headed, who, finding himself for the first time in his life face to face with love perfumed and in veils, had thought to quaff the passion from a cup of chased gold. As on awakening one still retains the impression of the dream that has agitated him, vague longings for what had never been but a shadow, so la Peyrade had need of all his moral energy to banish the memory of the perfidious Countess. Let us rather say he did not cease to long for her; only he took pains to clothe with a decent pretext his absorbing desire to succeed in finding her. This desire he called curiosity, thirst for vengeance; consequently this is the ingenious deduction he made:

"Cérizet spoke to me of a rich heiress; the Countess in her letter intimates that the whole intrigue in which she entangled me was to lead to a wealthy marriage; rich marriages are not so plentifully thrown at a man's head that two such should come my way in a few weeks; therefore, the match offered me by Cérizet and that proposed by the Countess must be the same crazy girl they are so strangely bent on making me marry; therefore, Cérizet, being in the plot, must know the Countess; therefore, I shall get upon the Hungarian's track through him. In any case I shall get some information about this strange choice of which I have become the object. Evidently a family who, to accomplish their ends, can use such well-dressed puppets, must occupy positions of considerable importance. I'll go, therefore, and see Cérizet."

And he went to see Cérizet.

Since the dinner at the Rocher de Cancale, the two old cronies had not met. Once or twice, at the Thuilliers', la Peyrade had asked Dutocq, who now seldom went there on account of its distance, what had become of his copying-clerk.

"He never mentions you," was the answer.

It might well be supposed, therefore, that resentment reigned in the breast of the vindictive usurer, the *manet alta mente repostum*. Such a consideration as this could not detain la Peyrade. He was not about to ask for anything; he went

under the pretext of renewing an affair in which Cérizet had mingled; Cérizet never meddled with things that were not of material interest to himself; the chances were then that he would be received with enthusiasm rather than in an unfriendly manner. The advocate decided, moreover, to call upon him in his office. It was less a visit than if he had gone to his den in the Rue des Poules, the surroundings of which were not especially agreeable.

It was about two o'clock when la Peyrade made his entrance into the office of the justice of the peace of the twelfth arrondissement. He passed through an outer room, filled with a crowd of people waiting to consult the magistrate in relation to the affixing and removal of seals on the effects of deceased persons, on public announcements, trials in process of settlement, disputes between masters and servants, between landlords and tenants, traders and customers, and finally matters concerning the police. He did not pause in the waiting-room, but pushed through to the office adjoining that of Dutocq. There he found Cérizet seated at a blackened wooden desk, at which another clerk, then absent, occupied the opposite place.

Seeing the entrance of the barrister, Cérizet cast a savage look at him, without moving or ceasing from his work of copying a judgment.

"Hallo!" said he, "you, Sieur la Peyrade. Well, you made a pretty mess for your friend Thuillier."

"How are you?" asked la Peyrade, in a tone at once resolute and amicable.

"I," replied Cérizet, "as you see, am still rowing my galley; and, to follow out the nautical metaphor, may I ask what wind has blown you here; perhaps it chances to be the wind of adversity?"

La Peyrade did not answer this, but took a chair which he placed alongside his questioner, after which he gravely said:

"My dear sir, we must have a few words with each other."

"It appears," persisted the venomous Cérizet, "that the Thuilliers have become furiously chilly since the pamphlet was seized."

"The Thuilliers are ingrates; I have broken with them," said la Peyrade.

"Rupture or dismissal," replied Cérizet, "their door is none the less closed against you; from what Dutocq tells me, Brigitte doesn't spare you. You see, my friend, what comes of trying to run things alone; complications arise, and there is no one to help smooth off the angles. If you had got the lease for me, I should have been introduced to the Thuilliers: Dutocq would not have deserted you, and we should have steered you safely into port."

"And if I don't want to arrive into port?" replied la Peyrade. "I tell you I've done with the Thuilliers; it was I broke with them first; I told them to keep out of my sunshine; and if Dutocq told you anything different, you may tell him from me that he lies: is that straight enough? It seems to me that I speak plainly."

"Oh, just so, my dear, if you are so mad at all these *Thuillierieses*, why, that was the reason you should have planted me among them; then you would have seen me revenge you and show 'em up."

"You are right in that respect," said la Peyrade; "I should have been glad to set you on them; but I had nothing to do with the matter of the lease."

"Doubtless," said Cérizet, "it was your conscience that caused you to tell Brigitte that the twelve thousand francs that I expected to make out of her were as good in her pocket as in mine."

"It seems that Dutocq," said the barrister, "still continues on his honorable course of spy, which he practised in the Bureau of Finance. Like others who follow that dirty profession, he makes his reports more amusing than truthful."

"Be careful," said Cérizet, "you are speaking of my patron in his own lair."

"See here," said la Peyrade, "I have come to talk with you on important matters. Be kind enough to dismiss the Thuilliers and their affairs, and give me your attention."

"Speak, my dear fellow," said Cérizet, laying aside his pen,

which had not ceased to run over the stamped paper; "I am listening."

"Some time ago you spoke to me of a girl whom I could marry—rich, matured, and suffering the least in the world with hysteria, as you euphemistically phrased it."

"So, there! I've been waiting for this," exclaimed the usurer; "but you've been full slow in getting here."

"In offering me this heiress, what had you in your mind?"

"*Parbleu!* to assist you in making a good strike; you only had to stoop to conquer. I was charged to make a formal proposal to you; and, as there wasn't any brokerage in it for me, I relied wholly on your generosity," said Cérizet.

"You are not the only one that made me that offer; a woman made the same, eh?"

"A woman?" replied Cérizet, in the most natural tone. "Not that I'm aware of."

"Yes, a foreigner, young and handsome, whom you must have met in the family of the future bride, and who seems to be entirely devoted to them."

"Never," said Cérizet, "has there been the trace of a woman in the negotiations; I have every reason to think that I alone had the charge of it."

"What," said la Peyrade, fixing Cérizet with his eye, "do you mean to tell me that you never heard of the Comtesse Torna de Godollo?"

"Never in all the days of my life; it's the first time I ever heard the name pronounced."

"Then," said la Peyrade, "it must have been another match, for this woman, after many very strange preliminaries, which it would take too long to speak of, formally made me the offer of a young person much richer than Mademoiselle Colleville."

"And matured? And hysterical?" asked Cérizet.

"No; the proposal was not embellished with those accessories; there is one other detail may give you the clue; Madame de Godollo desired me, if I wished more information, to see a Monsieur du Portail, gentleman."

"Rue Honoré-Chevalier?" said Cérizet, quickly.

"Exactly."

"Then it is the same marriage offered from two different sides; the only strange thing about it is that I should not have been informed of my collaborator."

"So," said la Peyrade, "you not only had no hint of the intervention of the Countess, but you do not know her, and can tell me nothing about her?"

"Not at present," replied the usurer; "but I may find out, for I have been treated rather cavalierly in this matter. This double attempt, however, ought to convince you how agreeable you are to the family."

At this moment the door of the office was cautiously opened; a woman's head was seen and a voice, immediately recognized by la Peyrade, said, addressing the clerk:

"Ah! your pardon; monsieur is busy. May I be allowed to say a word to you when you are alone?"

Cérizet, whose eye was as quick as his pen, noticed this: La Peyrade sat so that the visitor could not see him, but he no sooner heard the honeyed drawl than he hurriedly turned his head to hide his features. Instead, then, of dismissing her roughly, the usual treatment accorded intruders by this least pleasant of copying-clerks:

"Come in, come in, Madame Lambert," the modest visitor heard. "You would have to wait so long a time."

"Ah! Monsieur the Advocate of the Poor," cried his creditor, whom the reader has doubtless recognized, "how pleased I am to meet monsieur. I have been several times to your house to see if you had attended to my little matter."

"Truly," said la Peyrade, "for some time I have had many occupations that have kept me from my office; but all is in order, and the petition, properly prepared, has been sent to the secretary."

"How good monsieur is!" said the devotee, clasping her hands.

"*Tiens!* you and Madame Lambert have business together!" said Cérizet; "you never told me that. Are you Père Picot's counsel?"

"Unfortunately, no," said the devotee; "my master won't take advice from any one; he is such a stupid, wilful man. But, my worthy sir, is it true that another family council is to meet?"

"Certainly," replied Cérizet, "and not later than to-morrow."

"But why is this, monsieur, when the judges of the court have decided that the family have no rights?"

"Well, yes," answered the copying-clerk, "the judge of the lower court, followed by that of the court of appeals, rejected the application of the relations, the same as their application for a commission in lunacy."

"I believe you," said the devotee, "trying to make out that such a sensible man is mad."

"But the relatives are not going to give up; now they are taking it up from another point of view, and wish to have a trustee for the estate appointed. It strikes me, my dear Madame Lambert, that old Picot will be leashed up. There are some very serious charges advanced; to pinch a little is all right, but to grab the lot is a bit too much."

"Does monsieur believe?——" said the pious woman, raising her hands and lifting her shoulders.

"I! I believe nothing," said Cérizet; "I'm not the judge in the case. But the relatives say that you have made away with considerable sums of money, besides making investments into which they mean to inquire."

"My God!" said she, "they can look; I have not a bond, a share, or a note, not the least thing of value in my possession."

"Ah!" said Cérizet, with a sidelong glance at la Peyrade, "you have obliging friends who hold——well, it has nothing to do with me; each must manage for himself; what was it that you particularly wished to see me about?"

"I wished," replied the sainted one, "to implore you, monsieur, to beg monsieur the clerk to speak for us to the justice of the peace; the vicar of St. Jacques will give us a good recommendation. It is hard that the poor man," she added, weeping, "should be tormented so. They will be the death of him."

"I may as well tell you," said Cérizet, "that the justice is not favorably disposed to you. You saw the other day that he did not wish to receive you. As to monsieur the clerk and myself, we can do little for you; besides, my good lady, you are too close-mouthed."

"Monsieur asked me if I had some small savings invested. I cannot tell him that I have, when, on the contrary, everything has gone into the housekeeping for this poor M. Pi-i-cot, whom I am accused of having r-o-b-bed."

Madame Lambert had begun to sob.

"It's my opinion," said Cérizet, "that you make yourself out to be much poorer than you are; if my friend la Peyrade, who seems to have your confidence, was not bound by the obligations of his profession——"

"I," interrupted la Peyrade, quickly, "I know nothing of madame's business. She called on me to draw up a memorial for her that has nothing in common with justice or finance."

"Ah! that's it," said Cérizet, "she came about the petition on the day when Dutocq met her—the day, you know, after the famous dinner at the Rocher de Cancale, when you played the Roman."

Then, as if he attached no significance to this reminiscence:

"Well, my worthy Madame Lambert," said he, "I'll get my patron to speak to the justice, and if I get an opportunity I will speak to him myself; but I give you warning that he is not on your side."

Mme. Lambert made her exit with numerous courtesies and protestations of gratitude.

When the devotee had gone out, la Peyrade said to Cérizet, "You do not appear to believe that this woman came to me to draw up a petition. Nothing is truer, however. She passes for a saint in the street where she lives; and this old man, whom they accuse her of robbing, according to the accounts which have come to me, sees in her nothing but devotion, and we have put it into the head of the good woman to claim a Montyon prize, and her title to this reward is what she wishes me to prove and set forth."

"Good! the Montyon prize," cried Cérizet. "That is an idea, my dear fellow, and we were wrong not to cultivate it. I especially, the banker of the poor, as you are the advocate of the poor. As to your client, it is fortunate for her that the relatives of Father Picot are not members of the French Academy, for they would send her to the police court to get her prize of virtue. But to come back to our own affairs, I tell you that after all your shuffling about you had better end the matter; and, like the Countess, I advise you earnestly to go and see du Portail."

"But what sort of a man is he?" asked la Peyrade.

"Just this: he is a little old man as clear as amber," replied Cérizet, "and who, it seems to me, has the devil's own credit. Go and see him. It costs nothing, as they say."

"Yes," said la Peyrade, "I may possibly go; but, in the meanwhile, I wish you would find out something about this Countess de Godollo."

"What is this Countess to you? In this matter she is but a supernumerary."

"Well, I have my reasons," said the advocate. "In two or three days you ought to know what to think about her, and I will call upon you again then."

"My brave fellow," said Cérizet, "it seems to me you are amusing yourself with trifles at the threshold. Perhaps you are seriously in love with this go-between?"

"The pestilent fellow," thought the advocate, "he scents everything. There is no way of hiding anything from him.—No," replied la Peyrade aloud, "I am not in love; on the contrary, I am prudent. I confess I am not over anxious to marry this mad woman, and before embarking on this adventure, I wish to have some idea of where I am putting my foot. The tortuous way in which they are proceeding is not altogether reassuring to me; and since they are using so many agents it may be advisable for me to offset one by the other. Now do not go to playing tricks with me, but give me all the information about this Countess de Godollo you can come at, and as definite as the descriptions in a passport,—round chin,

oval face,—what is called a saddle to fit any horse. I forewarn you that I am in a position to verify your report; and if I find you are playing me false, I will break off at once with your du Portail."

"Play tricks with you, monseigneur," replied Cérizet in the tone and accent of Frédérick Lemaître, "who would then dare to provoke you?"

As he pronounced this phrase in a bantering manner, Dutocq appeared, accompanied by his sub-clerk. He had been on legal business in the city.

"Hallo!" said he, seeing la Peyrade and Cérizet together, "see the reconstituted trinity; but the object of the alliance, the *casus fœderis*, is gone down the stream. What have you done, my dear la Peyrade, to that good Brigitte? She hates you with a mortal hatred."

"And Thuillier?" asked the barrister.

It was the scene in Molière reversed; Tartuffe asking for news of Orgon.

"Thuillier in the beginning was not so hostile; but it appears that the business of the seizure is not so bad after all. As he needs you less he swims the more in the wake of his sister; and if he keeps on, no doubt in a few days, if it is decided that there is no case against him, you will be only fit for hanging, in his opinion."

"I am well out of that scrape," said la Peyrade, "and when I get caught again in such another festival——Farewell, my dears," he added. "And you, Cérizet, in the matter of which I have spoken to you,—activity, certainty, discretion."

When la Peyrade got into the courtyard, he was accosted by Mme. Lambert, who was awaiting him.

"Monsieur," said the devotee, with unction, "I hope you do not doubt that I came by my money from my uncle in England; and that monsieur does not believe the horrible things Monsieur Cérizet said before you?"

"That's all very well," said la Peyrade, "but you must understand that, with all the stories circulated by your master's relatives, there is little chance of your getting the prize for virtue."

"If it be the will of God that I should not obtain it——"

"You must see, too, how important it is to keep the secret to yourself as to the service I rendered you. On the first indiscretion the cash will certainly be returned."

"Oh! monsieur may rest easy about that."

"Well, then, farewell, my dear," said la Peyrade, in a patronizing voice.

As they were parting, "Madame Lambert!" cried a nasal voice from a staircase window. It was Cérizet, who had suspected a colloquy, and who had come to verify his suspicions. "Madame Lambert!" he repeated, "the clerk has returned, and if you wish to speak with him——"

La Peyrade had no means to prevent this interview, in which he felt that the secret of the loan would be in great danger of being divulged.

"Decidedly," said he on going away, "the 'vein' is not good. [illegible]don't know where this thing will end."

Brigitte had so strong an instinct of domination that it was [illegible]t only without reg[illegible]t but with secret joy that she saw the [illegible]sappearance of M[illegible] de Godollo. That woman she felt [illegible]xercised a crushing [illegible]periority over her, which while putting her house in go[illegible] nevertheless made her feel ill at ease; and when they [illegible]hile it was on good terms, and under a plausible and [illegible]retext, *Miss* Thuillier breathed freely. Brigitte felt wh[illegible] had gone like those kings who for a long tin[illegible] had b[illegible]n [illegible]inated by capable and necessary ministers, y[illegible] who [illegible] [illegible]n de[illegible]h steps in to remove the tyrant whose se[illegible] [illegible]nd r[illegible] [illegible]nflu[illegible]es they have had to endure.

Thuillier [illegible] mu[illegible] [illegible] in regard to la Peyrade. But Madame de [illegible]llo [illegible] matter of elegance, while the advocate wa[illegible]ful [illegible] which they had deserted almost simultaneously [illegible] a few days a terrible want was felt, to use the wo[illegible]ls [illegible]rospectuses, in the literary and political existence of the good friend."

The municipal councillor was suddenly called upon to prepare an important report. He could not decline this task, which his fame as a man of letters and a skilful writer—the

result of the publication of his pamphlet—had brought him; and before the dangerous honor which had just been bestowed upon him by his colleagues of the council-general, he trembled at his isolation and his incapacity. But it was in vain that he shut himself up in his study, gorged himself with black coffee, mended his pens, and wrote twenty times on paper cut to the exact size of that which he had seen la Peyrade use, "A Report to the Gentlemen, the Members of the Municipal Council of the City of Paris," place in vignette a splendid: "GENTLEMEN," and then rush madly from the room, complaining of the terrible racket which had stopped his ideas, when some one had shut or opened a closet door, or moved a chair. This did not advance the business, nor even begin it.

But here Rabourdin came to the rescue. He wished some little alterations in his rooms. This Thuillier willingly allowed, and then spoke to his tenant of the report with which he was charged, and said he would be happy to have his ideas on the subject. Rabourdin, who was familiar with administrative questions, hastened to throw on the subject proposed to him a great number of apt and lucid remarks. He was one of those men who are very indifferent to the intellectual capacity of their auditors. A fool or a wise man who would listen to them was alike in stimulating them to think aloud. When he had ended, Rabourdin perceived very clearly that Thuillier had not understood him, but he had listened to himself with pleasure. He was, moreover, grateful for the attention, obtuse as it was, of his auditor, and gratified at the readiness his landlord had shown in granting his request.

"However," said he on leaving, "I ought to have among my papers something relating to the subject in which you are interested. I will look them up, and send them to you."

In fact, that very evening he sent a voluminous manuscript to Thuillier, who spent the night in delving in this precious repertory of ideas, and who ended by extracting from it sufficient material to constitute a remarkable paper even considering the awkward use he made of this plagiarism. Read the next day at the Council, the report achieved a great success,

and Thuillier returned home radiant at the congratulations he had received. From this moment, which was a milestone in his life,—for even in advanced age he often spoke of the report which he had the "honor to present to the Council-General of the Seine,"—la Peyrade fell considerably in his estimation. He felt that he could do very well without the Provencal; and to this feeling of emancipation was added another occasion of happiness which came to him at almost the same moment.

A parliamentary crisis was impending; advantage was taken of this by the ministry to relax the stringent laws against the press and to extend clemency to political suspects, with the idea of disarming opposition. Thuillier, who was included in this hypocritical amnesty, received one morning a letter from the advocate whom he had employed in place of la Peyrade. This letter informed him that the Chamber of the Council had dismissed the complaint, and ordered the siege to be raised.

Then Dutocq's prophecy was realized. With this weight removed from his breast, Thuillier insolently swaggered over the dismissal of the case, and, with Brigitte chanting in chorus, spoke of la Peyrade as an intriguing scamp whom he had fed, who had extracted considerable sums from him, and who had behaved with the worst ingratitude, and that he was very glad that he no longer numbered him among his acquaintances. Orgon was in full revolt, and, like Dorine, was almost ready to cry:

> "A pauper who came without wearing shoes,
> In old, draggled clothes that no beggar would choose."

Cérizet, to whom all these indignities were related by Dutocq, would not have failed to report them all warm to la Peyrade; but the interview in which the clerk was to furnish the information in relation to Madame de Godollo, did not take place at the time appointed. La Peyrade had solved the problem himself.

Constantly pursued by thoughts of the handsome Hunga-

rian and not waiting to know what Cérizet could learn, he scoured Paris in every direction. He might have been taken for the most indifferent of strollers. He was to be seen in the most crowded places; his heart ever telling him that sooner or later he would encounter the object of his ardent search.

One evening, it was about the middle of October, the fall, as often happens in Paris, was magnificent, and out-doors was as bustling as at midsummer. On the Boulevard des Italiens, once known as the Boulevard de Gaud, as he wandered past the long line of chairs in front of the Café de Paris, where, in the midst of some women of the Chaussée d'Antin, accompanied by their husbands and children, may be seen in the evening an espalier of beautiful night flowers waiting only the gloved hand to pluck them, la Peyrade was struck to the heart; in the distance he fancied he saw his adored countess.

She was alone, in a splendid toilette which seemed rather out of place, taken in connection with her isolation; before her, mounted on a chair, frisked a white lap-dog which she caressed with her hands. After assuring himself that he was not mistaken la Peyrade was about to dart upon that so celestial vision, when he was forestalled by a *lion* of the most distinguished type; without throwing aside his cigar, without even putting his hand to his hat, this handsome young man entered into conversation with his ideal. When she saw the Provençal, pale and disposed to address her, the siren doubtless became alarmed, for she rose and took the arm of the man who was talking to her.

"Is your carriage here, Émile?" said she. "This is the evening for the closing of the Mabille. I should like to go."

As thrown in the teeth of the unhappy barrister, the name of this disreputable place instead of causing a wound was a real charity, for it saved him from a silly action, that of addressing on the arm of her cavalier the unworthy creature of whom a few moments earlier he had thought of with a treasure of tenderness.

"She is not worthy an insult," he said to himself.

But as lovers are a people not easily driven to raise a siege

when they have begun it, the Provençal was not as yet convinced that he had got to the bottom of the affair. Not far away sat another woman near the place whence the Hungarian had gone; but this one, ripe in years, feathers on her bonnet, showed beneath the folds of a colored shawl the sad relics of departed splendor. Her aspect was not imposing, nor one that would command respect; it was the contrary. La Peyrade seated himself near and addressed her without ceremony:

"Do you know, madame," he asked, "the woman who just went away leaning on the arm of a gentleman?"

"Certainly, monsieur, I know nearly all the *ladies* who come here."

"And her name is?"

"Madame Komorn."

"Is she as impregnable as the fortress by that name?"

It will be remembered that at the time of the insurrection in Hungary, our ears were continually dinned by the novelists and the journals with the famous citadel of Komorn; and la Peyrade knew that an inquiry carried on with an apparent indifference and levity is always more apt to give results.

"Does monsieur have an idea of making her acquaintance?"

"I don't know," said the Provençal, "but she is a woman who makes people think of her."

"And who is a very dangerous woman, monsieur," replied the matron, "a dreadful spendthrift, but one who makes little return for what may be done for her. I am able to speak knowingly as to that; when she arrived here from Berlin, six months ago, she was warmly introduced to me."

"Ah!" exclaimed la Peyrade.

"Yes, I had at that time, in the neighborhood of the Ville d'Avray—a pretty little place with a park, game preserves, and fishing streams—and being dull there and all alone, and not having the fortune necessary to lead a genteel life, a number of gentlemen and ladies suggested that I should organize parties on the line of picnics. 'Madame Louchard,' said they——"

"Madame Louchard!" repeated la Peyrade. "Are you then any relation to Monsieur Louchard of the commercial police?"

"His wife, monsieur, but with a legal separation. He's a terror of a man who wants me to go back to him; but I, though willing to forgive most things, I can't stand a lack of respect. Why, one day he raised his hand to strike me——"

"In fact," said la Peyrade, interrupting her to call up the subject again, "you arranged these picnics and Madame de Godo—I mean Madame Komorn——?"

"Was one of the first in my home. She there made the acquaintance of an Italian, a very fine man, a political refugee of high rank. You can quite understand that it did not suit my purpose that intrigues should be carried on in my house; still the man was so much in love, and so unhappy because he couldn't get Madame Komorn to care for him, that it ended in my being interested in this love affair, which was a mine for this madame, for she managed to get heaps of money out of that Italian. Well, would you credit it? being just then in need of a little help, when I asked her to advance me a little cash, she absolutely refused and left my house, taking along with her her lover, who, however, has no reason to boast of his acquaintance with her."

"What happened to him, then?" asked la Peyrade.

"It happened to him that this serpent knows every European language—she is smart to her finger ends, but more intriguing than smart—so, as it seemed, being employed by the police in some capacity, she turned over to the government a lot of correspondence which the Italian had inadvertently left around, so he was expelled from France."

"And after the departure of the Italian, this Madame Komorn——?"

"Had a number of adventures and broke up some fine fortunes; but I thought she had left Paris. For two months past she has not been seen. I believed she had totally disappeared, but the other day she turned up again more brilliant than ever. My advice to monsieur would be to leave her alone; but monsieur is a Southerner, he has the passion of the

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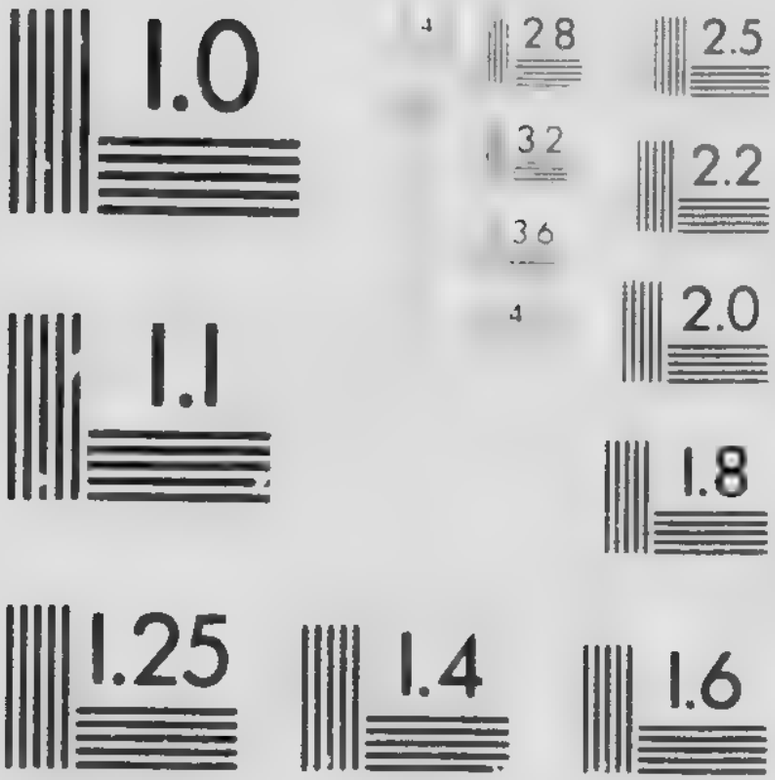

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Southerners, perhaps what I have said may only serve to heat his imagination; however, as he is forewarned, he may run no great danger. You honor your saint in proportion as you know him. But she's a very fascinating creature—oh! very fascinating. She was very fond of me; and although we parted bad friends she came up to me just now, and asked my address and said that she would call upon me sometime."

"Well, madame, I'll think about it," said la Peyrade, rising and making a bow to his informant.

It was a cold salutation, and his abrupt departure indicated that the man was not *serious* in his attentions.

Seeing the advocate pursue his inquiries with an apparent gayety, one would have thought that he was suddenly cured of his passion. But the affected indifference and coolness were only on the surface,—but the unusual calm which announces the approach of a tempest.

In parting from Madame Louchard, la Peyrade threw himself into a public carriage; and there a deluge of tears, similar to that witnessed by Madame Colleville on the day when he thought he had been defeated by Cérizet in the matter of purchasing the house for Thuillier, was the first explosion of his grief.

The investment of the Thuilliers, prepared with such care by la Peyrade, at the price of such sacrifice of pride, rendered entirely useless; Flavie, so well avenged for the odious farce he had played with her; his affairs in a worse condition than when Cérizet and Dutocq had shut him up, a ravenous wolf, in a sheepfold from which he had been driven like a silly sheep; his hateful projects against the woman who had outwitted him in spite of his cunning, and the still vivid memory of the seductions to which he had succumbed,—these were the thoughts and emotions of the night, which he passed either sleepless or excited by painful dreams.

The next day la Peyrade was unconscious. He was a prey to a violent fever, and the symptoms became so alarming that the physician who had been called in took every precaution against a threatened congestion. But it must be said

he arose cured, mentally as well as physically; he retained no other sentiment than cold contempt for the treacherous Hungarian, a sentiment that did not even rise to a desire for vengeance.

Once more on his feet, and pondering in regard to his future, he asked himself whether he should attempt a reconciliation with the Thuilliers, or whether he should fall back upon the crazy girl who had riches where the others had brains. But everything which recalled his disastrous campaign was invincibly repugnant to him; and, moreover, what security had he with this du Portail, who made use of such disreputable instruments to carry out his plans? Great commotions of the soul are like storms that purify the atmosphere; they bring good counsel and generous resolve. La Peyrade, in consequence of the cruel humiliations which he had suffered, ended by subjecting himself to a rigorous self-examination. He asked himself what he had gained by the base and intriguing life which he had led for more than a year. Could he not make a better and nobler use of the eminent faculties with which he felt himself endowed? The bar was open to him as to others; and it was a straight and broad road which might lead to all the gratifications of a legitimate ambition. Like Figaro, who showed more science and ability in order to live, than statesmen had shown in a thousand years in the government of Spain, he, in order to establish himself in the Thuillier household, to marry the daughter of a clarionet-player and a flirt, had expended more art, more wit, more dishonesty—it must be said, for in a corrupt society it is an element to be taken into account—than would have made him successful in an honorable career.

"Enough," said he, "of such acquaintances as Dutocq and Cérizet; enough of the nauseating atmosphere breathed by the Minards, Phellions, Collevilles, Barniols, and Laudigeois. Living in Paris," added he, "I'll shake off this provincial life, a thousand times more ridiculous and paltry than the provincialism of the country; that with all its narrowness has its individuality and customs, a *sui generis* dignity; it

is frankly what it professes to be, the antipodes of the Parisian; this other is but a parody."

With this determination la Peyrade called upon two or three attorneys who had offered to introduce him to the courts by giving him a few minor cases to plead. He accepted at once those which were given, and three weeks after his rupture with the Thuilliers he was no longer the advocate of the poor, but a recognized pleader.

He had become comparatively successful when one morning he received a letter—which disturbed him very much—from the president of the association of barristers, asking him to call upon him, as he had somewhat of importance to speak of. At once la Peyrade thought of the Madeleine house transaction—this must have come to the knowledge of the Board of Discipline, whose severity was well known to him. It might be that du Portail, whom he had not called upon, notwithstanding his conditional promise given to Cérizet, had been told the whole story by Cérizet himself. It was plain that the man would stop at nothing, as witness his employment of the Hungarian. In his eagerness to marry him to the crazy girl, had this maniac denounced him? Seeing him bravely and with apparent success, entering upon a career which might lead to fortune and independence, had his persecutor taken upon himself to render this career impossible? The barrister remained in cruel suspense until the hour when he might learn the truth. While he ruminated over his breakfast, Mme. Coffinet, who had the honor of being his housekeeper, entered to say that a Monsieur Étienne Lousteau wished to see him.

"Étienne Lousteau!" la Peyrade thought he had heard the name before.

"Show him into my office," said he to the portress.

A moment later he met his visitor, whom he seemed to have a faint recollection of having seen before.

"Monsieur," said la Peyrade's guest, "I had the honor once breakfasting with you at M. Véfour's; I was invited to that meeting, which was afterward somewhat troubled, Monsieur Thuillier, your friend."

"Ah! very good," said the barrister, pushing a chair toward him, "you are attached to the staff of some newspaper?"

"Editor-in-chief of the 'Écho de la Bièvre'; it is on that matter I wish to speak to you. You know what has happened?"

"No," said la Peyrade.

"What, are you ignorant that the ministry met a frightful reverse yesterday? But instead of resigning as one would have expected, they are going to throw themselves upon the country; so the Chamber is dissolved."

"I did not know that; I've not read the morning papers."

"All aspirants for a nomination as deputy are now in the field," continued Lousteau; "I believe that Monsieur Thuillier intends to offer himself for the twelfth arrondissement."

"I believe he will take that step."

"Well, I am willing, monsieur, to place at his disposal an organ of which I think you will not fail to estimate the value. The 'Écho de la Bièvre,' a trade paper, can have a decisive influence in that quarter on the election."

"And is your journal seriously disposed," asked the barrister, "to support Thuillier's candidature?"

"Better than that," replied Lousteau, "I am here to propose to Monsieur Thuillier that he purchase the organ; should he become the owner he could use it as he wished."

"But in the first place," answered la Peyrade, "what is the present condition of the enterprise? Being a trade journal, as you just called it, I have seen it but seldom; it would be unknown to me but for the remarkable article you were so kind as to devote to Thuillier's defence when the pamphlet was seized."

Lousteau bowed his thanks, and replied:

"The position of the paper is excellent; we can sell on easy terms, for we are about giving up its publication."

"That is strange with a prosperous journal," said the barrister.

"Nothing more natural, on the contrary," replied Lousteau;

"the founders, who are all prominent representatives of the leather business, had established this journal for a specific purpose. Their object has been accomplished. The 'Écho de la Bièvre' has become an effect without a cause. In such a case the best thing for stockholders who do not wish to be troubled with petty details of business, and who are not running after trifling profits, is to liquidate."

"But," said la Peyrade, "does the journal pay its expenses?"

"We have never concerned ourselves about that," replied Lousteau. "We have never sought to get subscribers. The object in establishing the journal was to exert a direct influence over the department of commerce to obtain an increase of the duties on foreign leather. You understand that outside of the tanners' circle that interest would not attract many readers."

"I should have thought, however," said la Peyrade, insistingly, "that a journal, even limited in its action, would be a lever that depended for its force on the number of its subscribers."

"Not for such as have a definite aim," replied Lousteau, dogmatically. "In such a case subscribers are an embarrassment, for you have to cater to and amuse them; and, during this time, the real object of the undertaking must be neglected. A paper which has but a circumscribed orbit should be like the stroke of that pendulum which, always striking steadily on one spot, fires at the right moment the cannon at the Palais-Royal."

'Well, what price do you put upon this publication, which has few or no subscribers, which does not even pay its expenses, and which has been devoted to an utterly different purpose from that to which it would hereafter be applied?"

"Before answering, I beg to ask you another question: Have you any intention of buying?"

"That depends upon circumstances," said the barrister; "I should naturally have to first present the matter to Thuillier who, I may remark, knows absolutely less than nothing of a newspaper and its workings. In his somewhat bourgeoi

ideas, property in a newspaper would be a ruinous investment; and if aside from an idea so entirely novel to him, and which would startle him at first, you should ask a formidable price, it would be useless to broach the subject. In my opinion he would have nothing to do with it."

"No," replied Lousteau, "I told you we should be reasonable; these gentlemen have given me a free hand; only I wish to remark that we have already had several propositions, and in giving Monsieur Thuillier the preference we consider that we are doing him an especial favor. When may I hope for your reply?"

"To-morrow, most likely," answered la Peyrade, bowing out his visitor.

"Shall I have the honor of seeing you at your home, or at the office of the journal?"

"No," said Lousteau, rising, "I will call here at the same hour to-morrow if it is convenient to you."

"Perfectly," said la Peyrade, conducting his visitor to the door, and believing that he recognized in him more self-sufficiency than ability.

By the manner in which the Provençal had received the proposition to become the intermediary with Thuillier, the reader will see that a sudden change had taken place in his ideas. Even if he had not received that disquieting note from the president of the order of advocates, the new path opened to Thuillier by the maturing of his parliamentary ambition would have given occasion for thought. Evidently his "good friend" would have to come back to him; Thuillier's eager desire to be elected would bind him to him (la Peyrade) hand and foot. Was not this the right moment, guarding himself with all the precautions learned from past experience, to renew the affair of his marriage with Céleste? Far from being an obstacle to any of the good resolutions inspired by his baffled love and his brain fever, this dénoûment, on the contrary, would be a guaranty of perseverance and success. Moreover, if he should receive, as he dreaded, one of these censures which would ruin his future at the bar, it was

the Thuilliers, the ones who profited by the cause of his fall, that his instinct claimed should afford him an asylum. Thinking thus, la Peyrade went to see the president of the barristers' association.

It was just as he had guessed; in a clear and very circumstantial report the matter of the buying of the house had been laid before the notice of his peers; the highest dignitary of the order admitted that an anonymous communication must always be regarded with distrust, and that he was ready to hear any explanations he might wish to make. La Peyrade dare not intrench himself in an absolute denial; the hand which had delivered the blow, as he thought, was far too determined and adroit not to hold the proof as well. But while admitting the facts in general, he endeavored to give them a favorable aspect. He saw that he had not succeeded, when the president said:

"As soon as the next vacation is ended I shall send a report to the Council of our order of the charges made and the explanations you have given. The Council only can pronounce on a matter of such importance."

Thus dismissed, la Peyrade felt that his future at the bar was imperiled; but at least he had a respite, and in case of condemnation, an asylum where to lay his head. He put on his gown, which he still had the right to wear, and went to the fifth court, where he had to plead a case. As he left the court, carrying a bundle of papers tied up with a strip of cotton webbing, and carried by the forearm being pressed against the chest, la Peyrade paced the Salle des Pas Perdues, with that worried look which distinguishes the overworked barrister. As he walked, wiping his face with his handkerchief—whether he had really become heated by his pleading, or whether he wished to appear dripping with perspiration, in order to show that his robe was not, like that of many of his colleagues, a mere dress-parade uniform, but a campaign suit—he perceived in the distance Thuillier, who had just caught sight of him in the great hall, and was making his way towards him.

He was not surprised at meeting him. On leaving home he had informed Mme. Coffinet that he was going to the Palais, and should be there until three o'clock, and she might send a person there who came to ask for him.

Not wishing to make his greeting by Thuillier a too easy matter, he turned abruptly as if he had suddenly remembered something and took his way to one of the benches with which the large ante-chamber of justice was provided.

There he seated himself, took a document from his bundle, and buried himself in it up to his ears, with the air of one who had not had time to examine in the quiet of his office the subject which his facility of speech and quickness of conception would permit him to plead offhand. In this reëxamination of documents in public there might also be recognized the attitude of a precise and conscientious advocate, who wished to refresh his memory, and take a final inspection of his batteries before going into battle.

During this time he watched Thuillier out of the corner of his eye; the latter, thinking la Peyrade was engaged on some serious matter, doubted whether to address him. After some backings and fillings the municipal councilor made up his mind, and sailed straight before the wind, heading for the spot for which during the past fifteen minutes he had been steering.

"Hallo! Théodose," he exclaimed. "Then you often come to the Palais now?"

"Well, to me it seems that barristers in the Palais are like Turks in Constantinople, where a friend of mine gravely assures me that they abound. It is I that should be astonished at seeing you here."

"Not at all," replied Thuillier, carelessly; "I'm here about that cursed pamphlet. Is there ever any end to your justice? I was summoned here again this morning, but I don't regret it, as I have had the pleasure of meeting you."

"The pleasure is mutual," said la Peyrade. "I am delighted to see you, but I must leave you. I have an appointment. You, too, must go into court."

"I've been there," said Thuillier.

"Have you been talking with your bitter enemy, Olivier Vinet?" asked la Peyrade.

"No," said Thuillier; and he named another judge.

"*Tiens!* that's queer," said the barrister. "This young man seems to be ubiquitous. He's been in court since morning; he has just given a decision in a case I was pleading a moment ago."

Thuillier colored, and making the best of his blunder:

"*Dame!*" said he, "I cannot tell one of you gentlemen of the robe from the other."

La Peyrade shrugged his shoulders, and said to himself aloud:

"Always the same man! Cunning, wriggling, never going straightforward."

"Of whom do you speak?" asked Thuillier, rather nonplussed.

"Why, of you, my dear boy; do you take me for an idiot? As if I and everybody else did not know that your pamphlet affair broke down two weeks ago. Why then should you be summoned to court?"

"Well, it was something about fees—it's all Greek to me," said Thuillier.

"And they chose the precise day on which the 'Moniteur,' announcing the resignation of the ministry, made you a candidate in the twelfth arrondissement, eh?"

"And why not?" answered Thuillier, "what connection has paying my fees to do with my candidacy?"

"I'll tell you the connection," said la Peyrade, drily. "The court is essentially amiable and complaisant. '*Tiens,*' it said to itself, 'here is the good Thuillier a candidate for the lower Chamber; how hampered he is with the attitude his ex-friend la Peyrade has assumed; he wishes now that he hadn't quarreled with him; he must be relieved from this embarrassment; let him be summoned for the fees he doesn't owe; that will bring him to the Palais where la Peyrade comes daily, thus he can meet him by chance, and avoid taking a step which would wound his self-respect.'"

"Well, that's just where you are wrong," replied Thuillier, breaking the ice; "I used so little cunning, as you call it, as to go to your house, and your porter told me you were here."

"Ah! that's better," said la Peyrade. "I can get along with folk who play straight. Have you come to talk about your election? I've already begun to work on it."

"Truly?" said Thuillier. "How?"

"Here," said la Peyrade, feeling under his robe for a pocket and bringing forth a paper, "read this; it's what I scribbled while the barrister on the other side was arguing. Read. You will see."

The paper read thus:

ESTIMATE FOR A PAPER, QUARTO SIZE, AT THIRTY FRANCS A YEAR.

Calculating the edition at five thousand, the costs per month are:

	Francs.
Paper, five reams at 12 fr.	1860
Composition	2400
Printing	450
Editor	250
One Clerk	100
Managing editor, also cashier	200
Delivery clerk	100
Folders	120
Office boy	80
Wrappers and office expenses	150
Rent	100
License stamps and postage	7500
Editing and Reporting	1800
Total per month	15,110
" " annum	181,320

"Do you want to start a paper?" asked Thuillier in dismay.

"I," said la Peyrade, "I want nothing at all; it is you that ask to be made a deputy."

"Undoubtedly, but in pushing me into the Council, you put this ambition into my head; but consider, my dear fellow, one hundred and eighty-one thousand three hundred and twenty francs to plank down. Have I fortune large enough to meet the demand?"

"Yes," said la Peyrade, "you can very easily stand this expense; considering the end you have in view, it is not at all exorbitant. In England they make far greater sacrifice to get a seat in Parliament. But at the same time please observe that all the items in this project are set very high; many of them can be reduced. You don't need a manager—you are an old accountant, I am an old journalist, we can well manage that—rent we needn't reckon; your old room, still vacant, in the Rue Saint-Dominique would make a fine office."

"That," said Thuillier, "would save two thousand four hundred francs a year."

"That is something to begin with, but your error consists in estimating the expense for a year. When are the elections take place?"

"In two months," replied Thuillier.

"Very well, the expense for two months would be thirty thousand francs, even if the journal had not a single subscriber."

"Very true," said Thuillier, "the expense would be much less than I thought at first; but does a journal appear to you indispensable?"

"So much so that unless we have that power in our hands I shall have nothing to do with the election. You do not consider, my poor friend, that in going to live across the river you have lost, politically speaking, immense ground. You are no longer a resident of the quarter; you could be killed by one word—what the English call *absenteeism*. This makes a hard game of it."

"I admit that," said Thuillier, "but in addition to the money the paper needs a title, a manager, and editors."

"We have the title already. You and I would be the editors, with some young men who can be found in Paris by stirring the ground. I have a manager in view."

"The title would be, then?"

"The Echo de la Bièvre.

"But there is already a paper bearing that name."

"That is just the reason why I advise you to take hold of the matter. Do you suppose I would be fool enough to ask you to start a new paper? The 'Echo de la Bièvre' is a treasure for a man standing in the twelfth arrondissement. Only say the word and I place it in your hands."

"How?" asked Thuillier.

"*Parbleu!* by buying it; it can be had for a song."

"See there, now," said Thuillier, in a discouraged tone, "you never counted in the cost of purchase."

"You hesitate at trifles," said la Peyrade, with a shrug of his shoulders; "there are other difficulties to solve."

"Other difficulties!" echoed Thuillier.

"*Parbleu!* do you imagine," exclaimed la Peyrade, "that after all that has taken place between us, I should boldly go in for your election without knowing exactly what I am to get for my services?"

"But," said Thuillier, somewhat astonished, "I thought friendship was a full exchange for services."

"Certainly; but when the exchange always consists in one side giving all and the other side nothing, friendship is inclined to grow stale. It asks for a rather more equitable settlement."

"But, my dear fellow, what then can I offer that you have not refused?"

"I refused because the offer was not frankly and heartily made, besides being seasoned with Mademoiselle Brigitte's special brand of vinegar; any self-respecting man would have played the same part that I did. You cannot give a thing and keep it, is an axiom in law, but that is precisely what you did."

"I think you were unreasonable, but the affair can be reopened."

"Very well," said la Peyrade, "but I have no desire to rely upon the success of the election or the caprices of Made

moiselle Céleste. I insist upon something serious and positive,—give and take. Quick settlements make good friends."

"I thoroughly agree with you," replied Thuillier; "and I have always kept too good faith with you to fear any precautions you may wish to take. But what guaranties do you want?"

"I ask that it shall be Céleste's husband that manages your election, and not Théodose de la Peyrade."

"Well, hurry as we might," said Thuillier, "as Brigitte said, it would take fifteen days; and, just think, two weeks wasted out of the eight we have before us."

"The banns can be published the day after to-morrow, for the first time, in the mayor's office; in the interval of publications something may be done; then, though the banns is not a step from which there is no retreat, it is at least a pledge before the public and a stride in the right direction; then your notary can draw the contract immediately. In addition, if you buy the paper, as you will not wish to have an idle horse in the stable, I shall not fear that you will play me false; for without my assistance the weapon will be too heavy for you to manage."

"But, after all, my dear fellow," objected Thuillier, "if the cost should be too high?"

"It goes without saying that you will be the judge of the terms of the sale. I have no more desire to buy a pig in a poke than you have. To-morrow, if you authorize me,—I do not say to conclude a trade, but that the transaction might be agreeable to you,—I will discuss the business with the proprietor, and you need not doubt but that I will take care of your interests as if they were my own."

"Very well, my dear fellow," said Thuillier, "go ahead."

"And as soon as the journal is purchased, we will fix the day for signing the contract."

"When you will," said Thuillier, "but you agree to use all your influence on my behalf?"

"As I would do if it were for myself, which, by-the-by, is not altogether an hypothesis; for I have already received sug-

gestions touching my own candidacy; and if I were vindictive——"

"Certainly," said Thuillier, with humility, "you would make a better deputy than I. But you, it seems to me, are not of legal age."

"There is a much better reason than that—you are my friend. I find you still the man that you were, and I will keep my word with you. I prefer that it may be said of me 'He makes deputies, but will not be made one.' Now I must leave you to keep my appointment; come to my office to-morrow, I shall have news for you."

He who has once been a newspaper-man will ever be one: this horoscope is as sure as that relating to drunkards.

Whoever has tasted of that feverish life, bustling yet comparatively idle and independent; whoever has exercised that sovereignty which criticises intellect, art, genius, glory, virtue, absurdity, and even truth itself; whoever has ascended the tribune erected by his own hands, fulfilled for only one short hour the functions of that censorship to which he is self-appointed,—that proxy of public opinion,—when he has been relegated to private life, regards himself as royalty exiled to Cherbourg; the moment a chance offers he thrusts forth a hand eager to again clutch the crown.

For the reason that la Peyrade had once been a journalist, when Lousteau placed within his grasp the weapon known as the "Écho de la Bièvre," all his instincts as a newspaper-man were revived, notwithstanding the inferior quality of the blade. The paper had gone down; la Peyrade was sure he could revivify it. Even the proprietor had admitted that the subscribers were scattering. He would exercise over them a *compelle intrare* powerful and irresistible. Under the circumstances the affair was a godsend. The barrister, threatened with being disbarred, had at once acquired a new position; he could hold it as a detached fort, and compel his enemies to reckon with him. On the side of the Thuilliers, the journal would make him a decidedly important personage. He would have a better opportunity of influencing the

election; and at the same time by investing their capital in an enterprise which could not succeed without him, he would bind them to him in such a manner that he would have nothing to fear from their caprices or their ingratitude.

Seized upon with avidity at the moment of Étienne Lousteau's visit, this opening had dazzled the Provençal, and we have seen the autocratic manner with which Thuillier had been imbued with enthusiasm for the discovery of this philosopher's stone.

The cost of the purchase was absolutely low; a bank-bill for five hundred francs, for which Étienne Lousteau never satisfactorily accounted to the shareholders, put Thuillier in full ownership of the title, property, furniture, and good-will of the paper, which they at once proceeded to reorganize.

During the operation of this regeneration Cérizet one morning called upon du Portail, with whom more than ever la Peyrade was determined to hold no communication.

"Well," said the little old man, "what effect on our man had the news we gave the president of the association? Have you heard anything?"

"Phew!" said Cérizet, whose frequent intercourse with du Portail had made him more familiar; "there's no question of that now; the eel has slipped away again; neither gentleness nor violence has any effect on that devil of a man; he has quarreled with the association, but is thicker than ever with the Thuilliers. 'Necessity,' says Figaro, 'annihilates distance.' Thuillier needs him for his candidature in the St. James quarter, so they embraced and made friends."

"Doubtless the marriage is arranged for an early date?" asked du Portail.

"Quite so," said Cérizet; "and then there's another machine to work; that crazy fellow has induced Thuillier to buy a newspaper; he'll let them in for forty thousand francs. When Thuillier once gets fairly involved he'll want to get his money back, so I expect to see them stick together for the rest of their lives."

"What paper is it?" asked du Portail, indifferently.

"A cabbage leaf called the 'Écho de la Bièvre,' a journal," said Cérizet, scornfully, "that an old journalist, hard up, induced the tanners, who are, as you know, the principal business-men of the place, to establish. From a literary or political point of view the affair amounts to nothing, but from the Thuillier point of view it is a master-stroke."

"Well, for a local election it is not such a bad venture," said du Portail. "La Peyrade is talented, active, and has a bright intellect; he may make the 'Écho' resound. Under what banner does Messire Thuillier present himself?"

"Thuillier!" replied the banker of the poor; "he has no more opinion than an oyster. Until he published his pamphlet he was like all the rest of those bourgeois, a fanatical conservative; but since its seizure he has gone over to the Opposition. His first stand will be with the Left Centre; but if the election goes the other way he will cross over to the Extreme Left. Self-interest for these people is the mainspring of their convictions."

"*Peste!*" said du Portail; "this combination of our barrister may rise to the importance of becoming a political danger from my view, which is conservative and governmental. I believe," said he, after a reflective pause, "that you worked on a newspaper once upon a time; you, 'Cérizet the Brave.'"

"Yes," replied the usurer, "I even managed one in conjunction with la Peyrade. It was an evening journal. A fine business we made of it, for which we were well paid!"

"Well," said du Portail, "why don't you go into journalism again with la Peyrade?"

Cérizet regarded du Portail with dumb amazement.

"*Ah çá!*" said he at last. "Are you the devil, Monsieur the Gentleman, that nothing remains hidden from you?"

"Yes," said du Portail, "I know a few things. But what is arranged between you and la Peyrade?"

"Just this; he remembered my experience in the business, and, not knowing whom else to employ, offered me the management of the paper."

"I do not know that, but I thought it very likely," said du Portail. "Did you accept?"

"Conditionally. I asked time for reflection. I wished to know what you thought of the offer."

"*Parbleu!* I think that out of evil good may come, especially when it cannot be avoided. I had rather see you inside than outside that concern."

"Very good, but to get in there's this difficulty: La Peyrade is well aware that I have debts; he won't help me with the security for thirty-three thousand francs which must be posted in my name. I haven't that amount, and if I had I should not care for it to be known and thus expose myself to my creditors."

"You have still a good part of that twenty-five thousand francs left that la Peyrade paid you not more than two months ago; is it not so?"

"Just two thousand two hundred francs and fifty centimes," replied Cérizet: "I cast it up last night. The remainder went to pay off pressing debts."

"But if you have paid your debts you can't have creditors."

"Yes, those I paid I don't owe; but those I didn't pay I still owe," said Cérizet.

"You don't mean to tell me that you owed more than twenty-five thousand francs?" said du Portail, incredulously.

"Would a man go into bankruptcy for less?" asked Cérizet, as though stating an axiom.

"I see I've got to stand the money myself," said du Portail, with some anger; "but the question is: whether your presence in the affair is worth to me the interest represented by three hundred and thirty thousand three hundred and thirty-three francs and thirty-three centimes?"

"*Dame!*" said Cérizet; "if I were only installed there I would very soon have la Peyrade and Thuillier at loggerheads. In the business of running a newspaper there are constant disagreements arising; now by taking the side of the ninny

against the clever man I could exalt the self-esteem of the one and wound that of the other, so that it would soon become impossible for them to work together. You spoke of a political danger. A manager, you should know, when he has the wit to be something more than a man of straw, can always quietly give the affair any desired impulse."

"There's some truth in that," said du Portail; "but to checkmate la Peyrade is what concerns me most."

"I've another gun to fire which would help to demolish him in the Thuilliers' estimation."

"Speak out then and let me know what it is," said du Portail, irritably; "you beat about the bush as if I were a man that could be finessed."

"You remember," said Cérizet, "that some time ago we wondered where la Peyrade obtained the twenty-five thousand francs with which he paid off Dutocq?"

"Ha!" said the gentleman, eagerly; "have you discovered the source of that very improbable sum in the hands of the barrister? Is there something suspicious about his manner of obtaining it?"

"Here it is," said Cérizet.

Then he related the whole details of Mme. Lambert's affair, but he acknowledged that all the sharp cross-questioning of this woman in the office of the clerk of the justice of the peace on the day of her meeting with la Peyrade had failed to elicit a confession from her; but that both were convinced by her manner of the correctness of their suspicions.

"Madame Lambert, Rue du Val-de-Grâce, No. 9, at the house of Sieur Picot, professor of mathematics," said du Portail, noting down the address. "Very well, my dear Monsieur Cérizet," he added, "call upon me again to-morrow."

"But take notice," said the usurer, "that I must report to la Peyrade to-day. He is very eager to settle the business."

"Accept la Peyrade's offer, but ask for a delay of twenty-four hours in which to obtain your security; if I find it to my interest I will furnish it—if not, you can get out of it by breaking your promise; you can't be sent to the court of assize for that."

Independently of an inexplicable kind of fascination that he exercised over his agent, du Portail never missed an occasion to remind him of his very shady commencement of their intercourse.

The next day, when Cérizet was again with the gentleman:

"You guessed rightly," said du Portail; "compelled to hide the existence of her booty, the woman, Lambert, who desired to draw some interest out of it, formed the idea of placing it in la Peyrade's hands; his devout exterior may have suggested this to her: she most probably gave him the money without taking any receipt. In what kind of money was Dutocq paid?"

"In nineteen bills of one thousand francs each, and twelve of five hundred francs."

"That's it, exactly," said du Portail: "there is no longer room for doubt. Now how do you intend to bring this information to bear upon Thuillier?"

"I shall tell him that la Peyrade, to whom he intends to give his god-daughter, is loaded down with debts; that he borrows enormous secret loans: that to pay them he means to gnaw the profits of the newspaper to the bone: that his position as a man deeply in debt may be made public at any moment, and could not fail to injure the candidate for whom he is working:

"That's all right," said du Portail, "but there is a more radical and decisive use to be made of the discovery."

"Speak out, master: I am listening to you."

"Thuillier," said du Portail,—"is it not so—has not a yet learned who prompted that seizure of his pamphlet, ha he?"

"Yes, he has," replied Cérizet. "The worthy citizen is per suaded that the seizure was instigated by M. Olivier Vinet deputy of the procureur-general. At one time this young magistrate had aspired to the hand of Mademoiselle Colle ville, and the honest Thuillier believes that the severity o the court is in retaliation for the injury done to one of it members."

"Better and better," said du Portail; "well, to-morrow

he shall receive a sharp note from Monsieur Vinet denying in full any such abuse of power—this will do as a basis for your other versions."

"Yes?" asked Cérizet, inquisitively.

"Another explanation must be given," continued du Portail; "you can assure Thuillier that he is the victim of the fearful machinations of the police. You know that that is all the police are good for—machinations?"

"Perfectly," said the usurer; "I have sworn to that twenty times when I worked on a Republican newspaper and——"

"When you were the 'brave Cérizet,'" interrupted du Portail. "The present machinations of the police is this: The government was much annoyed to see Thuillier elected to the General Council of the Seine without ministerial influence; it did not care to see an independent and patriotic citizen, who showed he could do without its aid; it further learned that this distinguished citizen was writing a pamphlet on finance, always a delicate subject, and one on which this dangerous adversary was so thoroughly experienced; so that when they did this corrupt government do? Why, it suborned a man in whom it was thought Thuillier had every confidence, and for the sum of twenty-five thousand francs—a mere bagatelle to the police—this treacherous friend agreed to insert a few dangerous phrases which should expose it to seizure and cause the arrest of its author. Then clinch it by telling him that the very next day la Peyrade, whom Thuillier knows had not a sou, paid Dutocq the exact amount of twenty-five thousand francs."

"The devil!" said Cérizet. "That's a good trick. All Thuillier's species believe anything that's said about the police."

"You understand now whether Thuillier will desire to have such a man always at his side, and, whether he will be eager to give him his god-daughter in marriage."

"You are a deep man, monsieur," said Cérizet, approvingly. "But I must confess, that I scruple to play such a rôle. La Peyrade has just offered me the management of this journal, and I work to thrust him out!"

"Well, he tricked you out of the lease in spite of the most solemn promises, and you are aiming at his happiness, so you need have no compunctions about what you do in this matter," said du Portail.

"It is a fact," said the wily usurer, "that such an event will absolve me. Yes, I'll do as you wish; I follow the road you have pointed out. Still there's another thing: I cannot in my first appearance step up and make my revelation; that will need some time, but the security must be paid at once."

"Listen, Monsieur Cérizet," said du Portail authoritatively; "if the marriage of la Peyrade with my ward takes place it is my intention to reward your services with thirty thousand francs; now that amount on one side and twenty-five thousand, on the other, you will get in all fifty-five thousand francs out of your friend la Peyrade's matrimonial combinations. But, as they do at the booths at the fair, I pay when I go out. Now if you risk your own money you will be eager to do the best for my cause; if, on the contrary, my money is at stake, you won't be nearly so ingenious in your dealings; if you are successful you will gain about a hundred per cent. That's my last word; I will listen to no objections."

Cérizet had no time to make any, for at this moment the door of the office, where this scene was taking place, opened, and a fair, slender woman, whose features showed angelic sweetness, came hastily into the room.

On her arm, wrapped in long, beautiful clothes, lay the form of an infant.

"There," said she, "that wicked Katt insisted that you were not the doctor; I knew better; yes, I saw you come in. Well, doctor," she went on, addressing Cérizet, "I am not at all satisfied with the baby's condition, not at all satisfied; she is pale, she has grown so thin. I think it must be her teeth."

Du Portail made a sign to Cérizet to take up the rôle so suddenly thrust upon him, and which in some sense reminded him of the part he had assigned himself in connection with the famous Cardinal affair.

"Evidently," replied he, "it is the teeth; children always grow pallid at such times; but there's nothing, madame, that need make you anxious."

"You really think so, doctor," answered the crazed girl—whom the reader has doubtless recognized as Lydie, du Portail's ward; "but see her poor arms, look how thin they have become, they have dwindled to nothing."

Then taking out the pins that held the outer wrappings, she showed Cérizet a bundle of rags which, to her poor intellect, represented a sweet pink and white baby.

"No, no," said Cérizet; "she is a little thin, perhaps, but the flesh is clear and firm and the color excellent."

"Poor darling!" said Lydie, kissing her dream lovingly. "I think she has improved since morning. What had I better give her, doctor? She won't take pap, and soup disgusts her."

"Does she like sweet things?"

"Oh! immensely," said the crazy girl, brightening up, "she adores them; would chocolate be good for her?"

"Certainly," said Cérizet, "but without vanilla; vanilla is heating."

"Then I'll get health chocolate," said Lydie, with all the intonations of a mother who listens to the assurances of the doctor as to the voice of a god. "Uncle," said she, addressing du Portail, "ring for Bruno and tell him to fetch some pounds from Marquis."

"Bruno has just gone out," he replied, "but there is no hurry; later in the day will do."

"See now," said Cérizet, "she has gone to sleep," for he was anxious, hardened as he was, to put an end to this painful scene.

"True," said Lydie, as she replaced the bandages; "I'll put her to bed. Adieu, doctor; you have been very good to come without being sent for. If you doctors knew what good you can do a poor anxious mother, you would come more frequently. Oh! she is crying now."

"She is so sleepy," said Cérizet; "she'll be much better in her cradle."

"Yes, and I'll play her that sonata of Beethoven's that my dear papa used to like—it is wonderful how that calms one. Adieu, doctor," she said again, pausing at the threshold of the door. "Adieu, good doctor." And she threw him a kiss.

Cérizet was quite overcome.

"You see," said du Portail, "she is an angel, always the same, never the least ill-temper, nor a cross word; sometimes sad, but ever with a motherly solicitude. This it is that first gave the doctors an idea that if the reality replaced the hallucination, she might recover her reason. Well, this is the girl with the accompaniment of a handsome dowry, that ass of a la Peyrade refused. But it has got to come to pass or I perjure my name. Listen!" he added, as the tones of a piano were heard; "hark! what talent! A mad woman! why there are a hundred thousand sane women who are not to be compared to her, and who are no more sensible except on the surface."

When the Beethoven sonata, executed with an emotion of soul and a skilfulness of touch which filled the clerk with admiration, had been finished, Cérizet exclaimed:

"I agree with you, monsieur; la Peyrade refused an angel, a pearl. If I were in his place——But, to come back to our subject—Now I shall no longer serve you with zeal, but passionately and with enthusiasm."

When Cérizet had given this pledge of fidelity, just outside of the room where du Portail had received him, he heard the voice of a woman which was not that of Lydie.

"Is the dear commander in his office?" said this voice, with a slight foreign accent.

"Yes, madame; but enter the salon, monsieur is not alone; I will inform him you are here."

And this last was the voice of Katt, the old Dutch housekeeper.

"Here—this way out," said du Portail to Cérizet with sharpness. And he opened a hidden door which led through a dark passage and on to the stairs.

The article by which the new editor of a journal first puts himself in communication with the public, his "profession of faith" as it is technically called, is always a laborious and difficult case of child-birth. In this case it was necessary that Thuillier's candidature should be hinted at, at least. The terms of this manifesto, after la Peyrade had made a rough draft of it, had resulted in a long discussion. This debate took place before Cérizet, who, on the advice of du Portail, had accepted the management but had postponed the payment of the security through the days of grace allowed to the new officials in all changes of proprietorship.

The discussion artfully stirred up by the master-knave, who had constituted himself Thuillier's flatterer from the start, more than once grew stormy, then bitter, but as the deed of partnership left all decision as to the editing to la Peyrade, he finally closed the matter by sending the manifesto to the printer exactly as he had first written it.

Thuillier was furious at what he called an abuse of power, and on the following day, finding himself alone with Cérizet, hastened to pour his woes and grievances into the bosom of his faithful manager; this gave a natural chance to insinuate the calumnious revelations already plotted with the man in the Rue Honoré-Chevalier.

This insinuation was presented with such art, with such skill and moderation, that it would have duped a much shrewder soul than Thuillier's. Cérizet appeared alarmed at having been entrapped into the betrayal of the secret, wrung from him by the ardor of his zeal and a sympathy which had been commanded by "the lofty mind and character which from the first had struck him in Monsieur Thuillier." The latter reassured the traitor that he should never be brought into the inquiry, which must of necessity follow such an alarming statement; he would say that other parties had informed him; if necessary he would throw suspicion upon Dutocq. Leaving the arrow rankling in the wound, Cérizet took his leave to make some necessary arrangements for the definite settlement of the matter of security.

The scene had taken place at the newspaper office. Since he had concluded the purchase Thuillier came to the office two hours before it was necessary; he spent his day there and wore everybody out with his ardent activity. He returned in the evening. He would almost have slept there, and in the few moments spent with his family, he was constantly complaining of the fatigue which the multiplicity of his duties gave him, of his fear that he would break down under the burden and his health be ruined. Now, being filled with this terrible revelation, he could not keep it to himself, he wished to unburden himself to some one. He sent for a hack and half an hour after had confided the whole story to his Egeria, that is to say to Brigitte, his well-beloved sister.

Brigitte had been very bitterly opposed to all the steps taken by Thuillier during the past few days. On no account, not even in the interest of his election, did she wish to renew their relations with la Peyrade. In the first place she had treated him badly. Then, in case this intriguer, as she called him, should marry Céleste, the fear of losing her authority giving her a sort of second sight, she had arrived at an intuitive perception of all the black depths of his character, and she had declared that at no price, nor under any consideration, would she occupy the same house with him. Intoxicated with parliamentary ambition, Thuillier had temporized. In due time he hoped to cure his sister of her prejudices. But when the question of the journal came up Brigitte opposed it with an earnestness bordering on bitterness.

"Ruin yourself, my dear," said she to Thuillier, "you are your own master and can do as you like; *ce qui vient de la flute s'en retourne au tambour* (What comes in by the door goes out by the window)."

Nevertheless, when the bargain was completed; when Brigitte found herself consulted in regard to many details of administration which opened a new field for her housekeeping ardor; when she had had the selection of two newspaper folders; when she had been able to transform into an office-boy, Coffinet, her old concierge of the Rue Saint-Dominique,

thereby reducing his wages as porter by two hundred francs; when she had been commissioned to purchase calico for the curtains of the editorial rooms, the lamps, shovels and tongs; when she had been requested to go from time to time to look after the washing of the inkstands, the sweeping of the office, and other small details relating to order and neatness, her ill-humor had abated considerably.

When, therefore, her brother related his confidences she did not receive them with reproaches, but with a certain chant of triumph at the probable increase of her own power.

"So much the better," she exclaimed; "it is as well to know at last that he is a spy. I always thought so, a mean sneak. Throw him out of doors without any explanation. We don't need him, to carry on the paper. That Monsieur Cérizet, who, from what you say, is after all a right good fellow, can easily find us another editor. Besides, Madame de Godollo, on leaving, promised to write to me. As soon as we are in communication she will easily recommend one to us. A pretty chick we were going to give our poor Céleste."

"How fast you go," said Thuillier. "La Peyrade, my dear, has only been accused, he must be granted a hearing; besides, a contract binds us."

"Oh! very well," said Brigitte, "I see the whole thing; you'll let that man twist you round his finger; a contract with a spy! as if contracts would stand with such fellows."

"Come, come, be calm, my dear Brigitte," replied Thuillier, "we must not act too hastily; if a justification, clear, categorical, and convincing, is not forthcoming, I shall break with him; I'll prove that I am not a plucked chicken. Cérizet himself is not certain; they are only his deductions; why I came to you was to see what you thought about demanding an explanation."

"Certainly, and if you don't get to the bottom of this affair I'll cast you off as my brother."

"That is sufficient," said Thuillier, solemnly; "you will find that we have one mind in such matters."

The establishment of the "Écho de la Bièvre" in the apartment of the Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer was still very incomplete, for it necessarily had been very much hurried. The old office situated on the Rue des Noyers, in a dilapidated house, had not seemed habitable for a moment, and in the amount of furniture enumerated in the deed, Thuillier had been very much deceived.

An inventory of this furniture would read as follows:

1. Three tables of black-stained wood.

2. Six straw-seated chairs, nearly perfect, like the famous Bologna lute immortalized by Molière.

3. A case of pigeon-holes, also of black-stained wood, numbered, and used for keeping the files of the journal.

4. An old-fashioned stone fountain, covered with wicker, which would contain about six buckets of water.

5. Three candlesticks and a pair of snuffers, the illumination of the "Écho de la Bièvre" under the old administration not having risen to the dignity of *Aurora* candles.

6. A water pitcher and two glasses.

7. Nine empty bottles, some of which, according to the printed labels, had contained *pure* Jamaica rum and *veritable* Swiss absinthe.

But what put the final stamp upon the establishment, and somewhat falsified the famous proverb of Léon de Lora, "Shoemakers are always the most poorly shod" (*Les cordonniers sont toujours les plus mal chaussés*), was that in a closet in the editorial room was a bountiful supply of blocks of peat of the largest size, dry, compact, durable; merchandise, in a word, of the best quality, showing very clearly that the stockholders had assembled there.

Having examined the property, Thuillier, after his first disappointment, had seen that something must be done at once, so he rushed for a carriage and was driven to the Rue Chapon. The next day one of the rooms of the new establishment, over the door of which a painter had been employed to write the sacramental words, "Office and cashier," was divided by a brass lattice work, breast high. On each side of the wicket

where the money for subscriptions was to be handed in. Brigitte had hung a green glazed calico curtain on brass rods. In the editorial room, likewise designated by an inscription in smaller letters, "The public not admitted here," a dozen cherry-wood chairs, an upright oak writing-desk, a large oblong table not yet covered by the green serge cloth which Mademoiselle Thuillier had agreed to purchase at auction, a paper-rack, a clock—called *cartel*—which hung against the wall, and imitated the striking of the village clocks; two old maps drawn by Samson, "geographer to his majesty," formed a very suitable temporary furnishing.

To crown all, at the very moment when Thuillier, returning from his conference with Brigitte, entered the editorial room, the last consecration had been given to the establishment of the journal. An apprentice from the printing-office entered, bringing a ream of printed letter-heads, with the name and address of the "Écho." Until the appearance of the printed letter-head, it cannot be said that a journal exists. The letter-head is in some sort its baptism. This is why the founders of public journals begin with this symbolic act. They are always afraid that their offspring will die before it is christened.

Thuillier found la Peyrade at his post as editor-in-chief; but during the last quarter of an hour he had been in a position of much embarrassment, caused by his high-handed assumption of being the sole selector of articles and contributors. Phellion, pressed by his family, and as a consequence of being on the reading committee of the Odéon, had come to offer himself as dramatic critic.

"My dear sir," said he, addressing la Peyrade, after having asked Thuillier as to his health, "I was a good subject of the theatre in my youth; the play and its scenery have during my somewhat long career had an especial attraction for me; the white hairs which now crown my brow do not seem any obstacle to my giving your interesting public some very profitable and interesting studies from my experience. As a member of the reading committee of the Odéon, I am also

familiar with the modern drama; and, being sure of your discretion, I may confidentially inform you that among my papers it would not be impossible for me to find a certain tragedy entitled 'Sapor,' which in my younger days gave me some celebrity when read in drawing-rooms."

"Well," said la Peyrade, trying to gild the inevitable refusal, "why not try and have it placed on the stage? We might be able to assist you on that line."

"Certainly," said Thuillier, "the manager of any theatre to whom we should recommend the work——"

"No," replied Phellion. "In the first place, as a member of the reading committee of the Odéon, having to sit in judgment on others, it would ill become me to enter the arena myself. I am an old athlete; my part is now to judge of the blows I can no longer deliver. In this sense criticism is within my sphere, the more so as I have some quite new ideas on the manner of editing a theatrical journal. The *castigat ridendo mores* ought to be, according to my feeble light, the great law, I might even say, the only law of the stage. Therefore I should show myself merciless in dealing with works of pure imagination in which morality plays no part, and which a prudent mother of a family——"

"Pardon me," said la Peyrade, "for interrupting you, but before allowing you to take the trouble to develop your poetical theories, I ought to inform you that our arrangements for the dramatic criticisms are already completed."

"Ah! that is different," said Phellion, "an honest man must keep his word."

"Yes," said Thuillier, "we have our dramatic critic; it was far beyond our hopes that you would offer your valuable collaboration."

"Well," said Phellion, grown somewhat cunning—for there is something in the newspaper atmosphere that flies to the head, especially a middle-class head—"since you really think that my pen might be susceptible of giving you good service, a series of detached articles, under the head of 'Varieties,' on divers subjects, which I should venture to entitle 'diverse,' might be of some interest."

"Yes," said la Peyrade, with a maliciousness that was entirely lost upon Phellion, "thoughts, something in the style of Rochefoucauld or de la Bruyère, these might do—what say you, Thuillier?"

He intended leaving the matter of refusals, as far as possible, with the proprietor.

"But I should imagine," said Thuillier, "that detached thoughts would be rather wanting in connection."

"Obviously," replied Phellion; "when I say detached thoughts I imply the idea of a great range of subjects over which an author allows his pen to stray without presenting them as a whole."

"Of course you would sign every communication?" queried la Peyrade.

"Oh, no; messieurs!" replied Phellion, dismayed. "I could not under any circumstances place myself on exhibition in that manner."

"Your modesty, which I fully comprehend and approve," said la Peyrade, "settles the matter. Thoughts are individuals, they require personifying by a name. Of this you yourself must be well aware. 'Sundry thoughts, by M. Three-Stars,' means nothing to the public."

Seeing that Phellion was about returning to the charge, Thuillier, who was in a hurry to begin his battle with the Provençal, cut him off rather curtly:

"My dear Phellion," said he, "I ask your excuses for being compelled to say that we cannot longer enjoy your conversation, but la Peyrade and myself have to consult on a matter of much importance; in a newspaper office—the time flies devilishly fast. If you wish, we will postpone the matter till a later day. Madame Phellion is well, I trust?"

"Perfectly," replied the great citizen, rising and not seeming to resent his dismissal. "When does the first number come out?" he added. "It is eagerly awaited in the arrondissement."

"To-morrow, I think," said Thuillier, conducting him to the door, "our profession of faith will make its appearance;

and it is high time, for with this display of empty boxes, which in journalistic phrase one calls 'bears,' we should soon put subscribers to flight. You will have a copy sent you, my dear friend; come and see us again and bring that manuscript: la Peyrade's point of view is not absolute here."

This balm shed on the wound, and Phellion gone, Thuillier rang for the office boy.

"You would recognize that gentleman again who just went out?" said the own brother of Brigitte.

"Yes, m'sieu; anybody would remember that funny ball of a head; and, besides, it's M'sieu Phellion; I've opened the door for him hundreds of times."

"Well, whenever he comes here again, neither I nor Monsieur la Peyrade is ever in. Remember this order, it is imperative; now leave us."

"The devil!" said la Peyrade, when they were alone, "how you manage bores. But look out; sometimes electors may be among the number; you were right in promising Phellion a copy of the paper; he possesses influence in the quarter."

"Well," said Thuillier, "can we waste our time on all the idle dreamers who come to offer us their assistance? It was not a bluff, however, that I gave to Phellion. We have a matter to discuss, and a very serious one. So take a seat, and listen."

"Do you know, my dear fellow," answered la Peyrade, laughing, "that journalism is making you preternaturally solemn? 'Take a seat, Cinna'—Augustus would have said it no differently."

"Cinnas are, unfortunately, more numerous than people think," said Thuillier.

He still felt Brigitte's prod, and he intended being cuttingly ironical; the top still rotated under the lashing it had received from the old maid's whip. La Peyrade seated himself near the round table. As he was mystified by this opening, to keep himself in countenance, he seized the large scissors used in clipping ready-made "editorials" from other journals, and began to cut up a sheet of paper on which Thuillier had attempted to write an article, but had not finished it.

The Provençal took a seat, but Thuillier did not begin. He arose and walked towards the half-open door, which he intended to close. But it was thrown wide open, and Coffinet appeared.

"Will monsieur," he said, "receive two ladies who wish to speak to him?"

"Who are these ladies?" asked the advocate.

"Two very well dressed ladies; they appear to be mother and daughter; the daughter is not to be despised."

"Shall they be introduced," said la Peyrade to Thuillier, "or shall I receive them in the ante-room?"

"Since they were told that you are here, let them come in," replied Thuillier, "but get through with them as quickly as possible."

And the proprietor of the "Écho de la Bièvre" began to walk back and forth with long strides, his hands behind his back; there was then something of the Napoleon in his attitude.

Coffinet's judgment in regard to the toilets of the two visitors, who had been received in the office, might be subject to revision. A woman is well dressed, not when she wears rich and expensive clothes, but when her toilet, which otherwise may be of extreme simplicity, combines a secret harmony of form and color, which makes it eminently becoming to her. Now a hat with a shallow front, called *bibi* (style of the period), buried in flowers, and thrown back so far that it seemed designed rather to protect the shoulders than to serve as a setting for the face; an immense French cashmere shawl worn with the awkwardness and inexperience of a young married woman; a large-figured, three-flounced dress of Scotch silk, too many chains and ornaments,—irreproachably-gloved and booted, however,—this was the costume of the younger of the two ladies. The other, who followed in the wake of her dashing companion, short and stout, with a high-colored complexion, wore a dress, a shawl, and a hat which an experienced eye would have recognized at once as having a second-hand look, if not coming from the *Temple*. The mothers of mistresses are always clothed in this economical manner; and

la Peyrade had before him an unmistakable specimen of t
species. Condemned to do duty for two generations, the
articles of dress, contrary to the natural order, are tra
ferred from the descendants to the progenitors.

Gracefully putting forward two chairs, la Peyrade asked:

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"Monsieur," replied the younger of the visitors, who, wi
out ceremony, had entered the room first, "I introduce n
self at the instance of one of your colleagues of the court, Mo
sieur Minard, advocate."

"Ah, indeed!" said the Provençal, "and in what matt
does he desire my interest?"

"Monsieur, I am a dramatic artist, and I made my déb
in this quarter, which induces me to hope that the local jou
nal will speak a good word for me. I come from the Luxe
bourg theatre, where for some time I have played the part
leading young lady."

"And you are now——?"

"At the Folies, where I am engaged for the part of Déjaze

"At the Folies?" repeated la Peyrade, in a tone whi
asked for explanation.

"At the Folies Dramatiques," smilingly interjected Madar
Cardinal, whom the reader will not have failed to recogni
"These young ladies are accustomed to shorten the nam
The Délassements-Comiques they call Delass-Com. I
ways tell them that is bad business. In trade, on the co
trary, we always string out rather than cut short. In t
fish-trade, for example, they never call out, 'Ray,' short-lik
but they cry, 'Ray—Ray—all alive.' I find that a much bett
way."

"Mother," said the leading young lady, in a tone render
more imperious by the fact that, carried away by the rem
niscence of her old trade, Madame Cardinal, in giving h
citation, had put on the tone of the fish-market.

"And you make your début soon?" asked la Peyrade.

"Yes, monsieur, in a fairy piece, in which I take five par
—a page, a drummer boy for the pupils of the Imperial Guar

a great coquette, in a Dugazon bodice, and as the fairy Lilas, where I appear at the finale, surrounded by Bengal fires."

"Very well, mademoiselle, I will direct the dramatic editor to give special attention to your début."

"You will encourage her, won't you?" said Madame Cardinal in a coaxing tone. "She is so young. Although nothing is to be said about it, I can assure you that she works day and night."

"Mother," said Olympe, authoritatively, "that is for them to decide. All I ask is that monsieur will promise me that my début will be noticed. Many pieces that appear at the Folies are not mentioned by the gentlemen of the press; but, as I repeat, being a child of the quarter ——"

"Very well, mademoiselle," said la Peyrade in a tone of dismissal. "My brother Minard is well?"

"Yes; he spent the evening with us yesterday, hearing me rehearse my parts."

"Please present my compliments to him," said la Peyrade, conducting his two visitors to the door.

Olympe Cardinal went ahead, as she had done on entering, about twenty paces in advance of her mother, who had difficulty in keeping up with her.

"Ha!" said la Peyrade to Thuillier on returning; "what do you think of Monsieur Minard, one of Céleste's suitors? Here is one who waits patiently."

"We are not in to anybody," cried Thuillier to the office-boy, closing the door and bolting it.

"Now, my dear fellow," added he, addressing la Peyrade, "we can talk. My dear," said Thuillier, starting with sarcasm —for he had heard that this was a good way to nonplus an adversary—"I have learned something that will please you; I now know why my pamphlet was seized."

And he looked fixedly at la Peyrade.

"Parbleu!" said the latter in a natural tone of voice, "it was seized because they wanted to seize it. They sought and found, as you may always expect them to find when they wish to, what the King's adherents call 'subversive doctrines.'"

"No, you are wrong," replied Thuillier; "the seizure was arranged for, concocted, and planned beforehand."

"Between whom?" asked la Peyrade.

"Between those who desired to annihilate the pamphlet and the miscreants who pledged themselves to betray it," said Thuillier.

"In any case those who bought," said la Peyrade, "got but a poor bargain; for, persecuted though it was, I don't see that it made much noise."

"But what about the vendors?" said Thuillier, with increasing sarcasm.

"Those who sold were the smartest, undoubtedly," said la Peyrade.

"Oh! I know you have a great esteem for smartness; but permit me to inform you that the police, whose hand is apparent in all this, is not apt to throw its money away."

And he stared anew at la Peyrade.

"So," replied the barrister, without blinking, "you have discovered that the police plotted in advance to smother your pamphlet?"

"Yes, my dear friend; and I know for a fact to whom the money was paid, and the precise amount that honorable person received."

"The person," said la Peyrade, thinking for a moment, "I may possibly know; but as to the amount, that is beyond me."

"Well, I can tell you that: twenty-five thousand francs," said Thuillier, emphasizing each word; "that was the sum paid to the Judas."

"Allow me, my dear sir, twenty-five thousand francs is a lot of money. I won't deny that you are a most important man; nevertheless, you are not such a bugbear to the government as to cause them to make such a sacrifice. Twenty-five thousand francs is as much as they would give for the suppression of some celebrated pamphlet against the administration of the civil list; but our lucubration on finance was not so important as that, and such a sum taken from the secret service fund merely for the pleasure of bothering *you* seems to me fabulously great."

"Apparently," replied Thuillier, with bitterness, "the honest intermediary may have been interested in exaggerating my value; one thing is certain, this monsieur had a debt of twenty-five thousand francs which was a great worry to him; and a short time before the seizure this same monsieur all at once found means to pay; unless you can tell me whence he obtained that money, I don't believe it is very hard to draw the inference."

In his turn la Peyrade gazed fixedly at Thuillier.

"Monsieur Thuillier," said he, raising his voice, "let us leave generalities and enigmas; will you do me the favor to name this person?"

"Well, no," said Thuillier, striking the table; "I shall not name him because of the sentiments of esteem and affection which at one time united us; but you have understood me, Monsieur de la Peyrade."

"It is a fact, I should have understood," said the Provençal, in a voice broken with emotion, "that in introducing a serpent here it would not be long before I should be soiled by its venom. Poor fool, you! don't you see that this is one of Cérizet's calumnies, of which you have made yourself the echo?"

"Cérizet has nothing whatever to do with it; on the contrary, he has nothing but good to say of you; but answer: how was it that you, not having a sou the night before (and I have cause to know this), were able to pay Dutocq the round sum of twenty-five thousand francs the next day?"

La Peyrade reflected a moment.

"No," said he, "Dutocq did not tell you; he is not the man who dare tackle me unless it would be of great benefit to him. The infamous calumniator is Cérizet, from whose hands I wrung your house on the Madeleine—Cérizet, whom, in my kindness, I sought on his own dunghill to place him in an honorable position: that is the wretch to whom a benefit is only an encouragement to further treachery. *Tiens!* if I should tell you what manner of man that is, I should fill your heart with loathing; in the sphere of infamy he has discovered new worlds——"

Thuillier this time made an apt reply.

"I know nothing about Cérizet except through you," said he; "you it was who introduced him to me as a manager, giving every assurance that he was reliable; but, by making him blacker than the devil, and even allowing that this communication comes from him, I don't see, my boy, that it makes you any the whiter."

"I was, no doubt, to blame in introducing him to you; but we needed a man familiar with the newspaper business, and I thought he would answer that purpose. Can the depths of such souls ever be fathomed? I thought he had reformed. After all, I said to myself, he is but a mechanical tool, a mere signing-machine. I expected to find in him at least the materials for a man of straw. I deceived myself, he will never be but a man of mud."

"That's all well and good," said Thuillier, "but the twenty-five thousand francs which came so opportunely into your hands, whence came they? That is what you fail to explain."

"But use a bit of common sense," replied la Peyrade; "a man in my position in the pay of the police, and yet so poor that I could not throw in the face of that harpy, your sister, the ten thousand francs she so insolently demanded of me, and of which you were a witness."

"To end it all," said Thuillier, "if you obtained the money honestly, as I am most anxious to believe, what prevents you telling me who gave it to you?"

"That I cannot do," replied the barrister, "the source of that money is a professional secret."

"See now, you told me yourself that the rules of your order prevented your entering into business of any description."

"It would be strange, admitting that I had done something not quite in the regular course, that you should reproach me after all I risked for you."

"My poor friend, you are trying to put the hounds off the scent, but you can't put me off the track; I am the master of my confidence and esteem, and, if I pay you the amount stipulated in the deed, I take the paper into my own hands."

"So you mean to turn me out!" exclaimed la Peyrade. "The money you have put into this business, your chances of election, all sacrificed on one calumny brought by a Cérizet."

"In the first place," answered Thuillier, "a new editor-in-chief can soon be found to replace you, my dear fellow; it was said long ago that no man is indispensable. As to the election, I would sooner not win it than owe it to the help of one who——"

"Go ahead!" said la Peyrade, seeing that Thuillier hesitated; "or, no, rather be silent, for in less than an hour you will blush at your suspicions and ask my pardon on your knees."

The Provençal saw that without a confession he would have the newly recovered future cut from beneath his feet. He resumed his speech with great gravity.

"You will remember, my friend," said he, "that you were absolutely without pity, and that by subjecting me to a kind of moral torture you compelled me to reveal a secret which is not my own."

"Go on, all the same," replied Thuillier, "I'll take the whole responsibility; make me see the light in all this darkness, and I will be the first to recognize that I was wrong."

"Well," said la Peyrade, "those twenty-five thousand francs are the savings of a domestic who came with them to me asking me to pay her interest on them."

"A domestic who has saved twenty-five thousand francs! Strike me! it seems to me she must have lived in a grand house."

"On the contrary, she is the housekeeper of an old, infirm savant; it was just on account of the improbability of this sum being in her hands that she wished to put it in mine as a kind of fiduciary agent."

"By my faith, my friend," said Thuillier, in a flippant voice, "you said we needed a romancist, but with your talent we can rest quite easy. Here's imagination!"

"How's that?" said la Peyrade, angrily; "you don't believe me?"

"No, I don't believe you; twenty-five thousand francs saved in the service of an old professor; why, that's about as credible as the officer of the *White Lady* buying a castle out of his savings."

"But if I prove the truth of my explanation—if I let you put your finger in the wound?"

"In that case, like Saint-Thomas, I shall lower my flag before the evidence; but you must permit me to wait, my noble friend, until you give that proof."

Thuillier thought himself superb.

"I would have given two louis," said he to himself, "if Brigitte were only here to see how I did it."

"Come then," said la Peyrade, "suppose that without going outside this office, and by means of a note which shall pass before your eyes, I bring before you the person from whom I received the money; if she confirms my statement, shall you believe then?"

This proposition and the assurance with which it was made staggered Thuillier.

"In that case, of course," replied he, changing his tune. "But this must be done to-day, before the seance is over, eh?"

"Without going out from here, I said; it seems to me that is clear enough."

"And who will carry your note when you have written it?" asked Thuillier. He thought he displayed much acumen by looking after each detail.

"Who will carry it?" said la Peyrade. "*Parbleu!* your office boy; you can send him yourself."

"Write it, then," said Thuillier, determined to push him to the wall.

La Peyrade took a sheet of paper with the letter-head and wrote, reading aloud, as follows:

Mme Lambert is requested to come immediately on urgent business to the office of the "Echo de la Bièvre," Rue Saint-Dominique-d'Enfer, whither the bearer will conduct her. She is impatiently awaited by her devoted servant,

THÉODOSE DE LA PEYRADE.

"Well, will that suit?" said the barrister, passing it to Thuillier.

"Perfectly," said Thuillier, at the same time taking the precaution to fold the paper and to seal it himself. "Now add the address," he added, returning the letter to la Peyrade.

Thuillier rang for Coffinet.

"You will go," said he, "to that address with this note, and the person will return with you. But will she be there?" he asked on reflection.

"More than probable," replied la Peyrade. "In any event, neither you nor I will go out of this room until she has come. This matter must be made clear."

"Go!" said Thuillier to the office boy in a theatrical manner.

When they were alone, la Peyrade took up a paper and appeared to be absorbed in its contents.

Thuillier by this time was somewhat uneasy, and regretted that he had not taken a step, the idea of which had come to him too late.

"I ought not to have carried the matter so far," said he to himself; "I should have torn up the note." Then trying to show that he reinstated la Peyrade in the position from which he had threatened to dismiss him:

"Oh," said he, "I have just come from the printer; the new type has arrived; we can, I think, make our appearance to-morrow."

La Peyrade made no reply, but got up and continued to read his paper nearer the window.

"He is vexed," said Thuillier to himself; "well, if he is innocent, he is like to be; but why, after all, should he have brought such a man as Cérizet here?"

Then, to hide his embarrassment and preoccupation, he sat down at the editor's table, took a letter-head sheet of paper, and began to write.

La Peyrade, on his part, returned to the table, took up some paper and with feverish rapidity wrote like a man who is violently agitated, making the pen fairly fly across the paper.

Thuillier from the corner of his eye tried hard to see what la Peyrade was writing; he noticed it was arranged in numbered paragraphs:

"Hallo!" said he, "are you drafting a new law?"

"Yes," answered Peyrade coldly, "the law of the vanquished."

Soon after the boy opened the door and introduced Mme. Lambert, who arrived looking rather afraid.

"You are Madame Lambert?" asked Thuillier, in the tone of a magistrate.

"Yes, monsieur," replied the devotee, in an anxious voice.

Requesting her to be seated and noticing that the office boy remained as if expecting further orders:

"That will do," said Thuillier, "go; and admit no one."

The gravity and lordly tone of Thuillier increased the emotion of Madame Lambert. She had expected to meet only la Peyrade, and she found herself in the presence of a stranger with a stern air, while the advocate, who merely saluted her, did not speak a word; moreover, the scene took place in a newspaper office, and we all know that, particularly in the eyes of devotees, everything that has to do with the press savors of the infernal and diabolical.

"Well, my dear fellow," said Thuillier to the barrister, "it seems to me that nothing hinders your explaining to madame why you have sent for her."

In order to remove all suspicion from the mind of Thuillier, la Peyrade resolved to treat the matter openly and without preparation.

"We wish to ask you, madame," said la Peyrade *ex abrupto*, "if it is not true that about two and a half months ago you placed in my hands, subject to interest, the sum of twenty-five thousand francs?"

Madame Lambert could not restrain a start, though she felt the eyes of both were fixed upon her.

"Our Lord above!" she exclaimed, "and where should I get such a sum as that?"

La Peyrade showed no sign of the uneasiness he might have been supposed to experience.

As for Jérôme Thuillier, who now glanced at him with commiseration:

"You see, my dear fellow——" said he.

"So," went on the Provençal, "you are quite certain, madame, that you did not place in my hands the sum of twenty-five thousand francs; you declare it? you would swear to this?"

"Why, monsieur, is it at all likely that twenty-five thousand francs and a poor woman like myself would ever pass through the same door? Even the little I had has gone to help the housekeeping of that poor, dear gentleman whose servant I have been for twenty years."

"This," said the pompous Thuillier, "seems unanswerable."

La Peyrade showed no sign of annoyance; on the contrary, he seemed to have an air of playing into the hand of Thuillier:

"You hear, my dear sir," said he to him, "and if necessary I shall call upon you to so testify, that madame here never had twenty-five thousand francs; consequently she could not have given that amount to me; and as the notary Dupuis, with whom I fancied I had placed them, left Paris this morning for Brussels, carrying with him all his clients' money, I have a clear account with madame, and the flight of the notary Dupuis——"

"The notary Dupuis has absconded!" cried Mme. Lambert, carried away by this dreadful news out of her usual dulcet tones and Christian resignation; "the wretch, the villain, when only this morning he took the communion at St. Jacques du Haut-Pas."

"That was doubtless to pray for a safe journey," replied la Peyrade.

"Monsieur can talk lightly enough about it," continued Mme. Lambert, "but that brigand has carried off all my savings; but I gave them to monsieur, and monsieur, of course, is responsible for them; he is the only one I know in the matter."

"Hein!" said la Peyrade to Thuillier, pointing to Mme.

Lambert, whose demeanor had something of a she-wolf wh has had her whelps ravished from her; "is that nature? te me, have we gotten up this comedy?"

"I am speechless," replied Thuillier, "at the audacity o that Cérizet; struck dumb by my own stupidity, I can bu surrender at discretion."

"Madame," said la Peyrade gayly, "will please excuse m for alarming her, it was an absolute necessity. The notar Dupuis remains a pious gentleman, and incapable of injurin his clients. Your money is always safe in his hands. As t this gentleman, to whom it was necessary for me to give proo that you had really put this money in my hands, your secre is as safe with him as with me."

"Very good, monsieur," said Mme. Lambert, "then yo have nothing more to say to me?"

"No, my dear madame, except to beg your pardon for th slight fright we caused you."

Madame Lambert started to take her leave with every sig of the most respectful humility; but when she had reache the door she retraced her steps, went up to la Peyrade, an said in dulcet tones:

"When does monsieur think it will suit him to return m money?"

"I told you," replied la Peyrade coldly, "that notaries do not return on demand the money they have invested."

"Does monsieur think that if I should go myself to Monsieur Dupuis' office, and ask him if it would be convenient——"

"I think," replied the advocate sharply, "that in going to hi office you would be taking a ridiculous step. He received t money from me, in my name, as you desired, and recognize only myself in the business."

"Then, monsieur will arrange, will he not, to return thi small sum, which is a trifle for him? I shall not press monsieur at present, but in two or three months I may need th money. I have heard of a small property which may be desirable."

"Very well, Madame Lambert," replied Peyrade, scarcely restraining his irritation. "It shall be as you desire; and I hope you will have your money sooner than you expect."

"Monsieur is not angry?" said the saint. "He always told me that on the first indiscretion on my part——"

"Yes, yes, that is all understood," said the Provençal, interrupting her.

"Then I have the honor to be the gentlemen's very humble servant," said the devotee, finally taking her departure.

"You see, my dear fellow," said Théodose, when he and Thuillier were alone, "into what a scrape your sick imagination has brought me. The debt was dormant, in a chronic state; you have caused it to pass into the acute stage. Now she will press for it."

"I am ashamed, my dear friend, of my silly credulity; but don't be uneasy about that matter, we can arrange all that, even if I have to go your security or make an advance on the wedding *dot*."

"For the rest, my excellent friend," said la Peyrade, "we will begin by taking stock of our mutual relationship; I have no appetite for being haled up every morning and interrogated as to my conduct; just now while we awaited that woman I drew up a little memorandum which we will talk over and sign, by your leave, before we issue the first number."

"But in our deed of partnership," said Thuillier, "it seems to me we have a chart——"

"That by a paltry forfeit of five thousand francs, as by clause 14," interrupted Théodose, "you can, when you wish, put me in the soup. Thank you! we will have something rather more definite."

At this moment entered Cérizet with the triumphant air of a conqueror.

"My masters," said he, "I have brought the capital, and in an hour the security can be perfected."

But seeing that the news was received with marked frigidity:

"Well," said he, "what's up now?"

"It is this," said Thuillier, "that I refuse to associate wit double-faced men and calumniators; we have use for neith you nor your money, and I beg you to no longer honor the premises with your company."

"Well! well! well!" said Cérizet, "so Papa Thuillier has a lowed himself to be caught again."

"Go away," said Thuillier, "we have no use for you."

"My boy," said Cérizet to la Peyrade, "it seems that you' twisted the good bourgeois round your finger again. Wel he's not the inventor of the printing-press; and as for yo we have seen the kind of work you can turn out. Well, doesn't matter, but nevertheless you were wrong in not callin upon du Portail. I shall tell him——"

"Will you go away, monsieur?" cried Thuillier, threate ingly.

"After all, my dear sir," continued the usurer, "it was n I that looked you up. I was doing well enough before yo sent for me, and I shall do quite as well after. Only try t avoid paying that twenty-five thousand francs out of you own pocket, for that's threatening you."

As he said this Cérizet replaced his pocket-book containin the cash in his breast-pocket, and, after smoothing his hat o his coat sleeve, went out.

Thuillier had been led by listening to Cérizet into a mos disastrous campaign. Become the humble servant of de l Peyrade, he was compelled to bow to his conditions: fiv hundred francs a month for the barrister's services on th paper; his editorship of the journal to be paid for at the rat of fifty francs per column—an enormous sum, taking int account the small size of the sheet; a pledge to issue the pape for at least six months, under a forfeit of fifteen thousan francs; the most absolute omnipotence as editor-in-chief, bein free to insert, alter, or reject any article without being com pelled to explain his reasons therefor; these were the stipula tions signed in duplicate by both parties in "good faith."

But, in virtue of another private agreement, Thuillier gav security for the payment of the sum of twenty-five thousan

francs for which la Peyrade was accountable to the devotee, "the said Maître la Peyrade" binding himself, in case the repayment was required before his marriage with Mlle. Colleville could take place, to acknowledge the said sum as being in advance on account of the *dot*. In this ingenious manner, the crafty Provençal succeeded in evading the law which provides against such forestalling of the consideration mentioned in the marriage-contract. For was not this sum of twenty-five thousand francs, for which Thuillier had no security until the conclusion of a problematical marriage, a real forfeit?

Matters being thus arranged and everything being accepted by the candidate who, if he lost la Peyrade, could see no chance of his election, Thuillier had a happy thought. He went to the Cirque-Olympique, where he remembered in the box-office a former employé in his bureau—a man named Fleury—to whom he proposed the position as manager. An old soldier, a good shot and capital sword-man, Fleury would be properly respected in a newspaper office. Not less clever in the art of "leading his creditors a dance," he was the first clerk in the Bureau of Finance to hit on the ingenious idea of inventing spurious suits against his salary, thus preventing the collection of any legal attachments that might be taken. He took the same proceedings to preserve from his creditors the three thousand three hundred and thirty-three francs thirty-three centimes, which were required by the law to be deposited in his name. The working staff being thus constituted, the first number was launched.

Thuillier now resumed his explorations about Paris very much as he did on the publication of his pamphlet. Walking into a reading-room or café, he would ask for the "Écho de la Bièvre," and when, as was unfortunately too often the case, he was told they did not know of such a paper:

"This is incredible!" he would exclaim, "that a place with any pretensions to respect does not take such a popular paper."

Then he would depart in disdain, without seeing that in

many places where this drummer's dodge was quite unde stood they were laughing under his nose.

The evening of the day of the salutatory article, Brigitt although it was not Sunday, had her salon thronged. Reco ciled with la Peyrade, whom her brother had brought to dinn the old maid went so far as to say that his leading editorial wa a "hit." The remainder of the company said the public wa delighted with the first number. The public! everybody know what that is: the man who has launched a few lines in prin upon a trusting world has his public in five or six intimate who, from a desire to avoid a quarrel with the author, mak some favorable comment upon his lucubrations.

"As for myself," said Colleville, "I can say that it is th first political editorial that did not send me to sleep."

"It is certain," said Phellion, "that the editorial appear to me to be stamped with vigor combined with an Attic styl which we may search in vain for in the columns of the ordi nary public prints."

"Yes," said Dutocq, "it is very well put; and there is style of elegance about it not often found. But we must se how it keeps up. I believe that to-morrow the 'Écho de l Bièvre' will be bitterly attacked by the other journals."

"*Parbleu!*" said Thuillier, "that is just what we want. I the government would be good enough to seize us——"

"Thank you, patron," said Fleury, whom Thuillier had als brought to dinner, "I would prefer not to enter so soon upo the exercise of my functions."

"Oh, seized," said Dutocq "you will not be seized, but I think the ministerial journals will give you a broadside."

The next day Thuillier was early at the office, to be th first to meet the formidable fire of the ministerial press After looking through every paper he found that not one o them had even mentioned the "Écho de la Bièvre," no mor than if it did not exist. When la Peyrade arrived he foun his unhappy friend in despair.

"That is nothing to be surprised at," said la Peyrade tranquilly. "I let you enjoy yourself yesterday in the hop

of a hot encounter with the press; but I well knew that it was most unlikely that any mention of us would appear in the morning papers. Is not every paper, brought out with any alliancy, bound to be met with a conspiracy of silence which lasts for a fortnight, and sometimes for months?"

"A conspiracy of silence!" echoed Thuillier, admiringly. He did not understand what this meant, but the words had a grand sound and appealed to the imagination. Then la Peyrade explained that by agreement no new journal was mentioned by the others lest it might serve to advertise the startling. The explanation was not so good as the phrase. The middle class is ever thus; words are coins which pass without question. For a word he becomes exalted or abased, will insult or applaud. With a word he can be brought to make a revolution and overthrow the government he has chosen.

But the journal was simply a means to an end,—the election of Thuillier, which had been insinuated rather than openly stated in the early numbers. In a few days a letter from several electors appeared thanking the "Écho" for its "firm stand and their delegate in the Council for looking after the welfare of his district. "This attitude," said the letter, "had brought down upon him the persecution of the government, which, trailed in the wake of foreign powers, had sacrificed Poland and sold itself to England. The arrondissement needed to represent it in the Chamber a man of decided convictions, who, holding firmly aloft the banner of opposition to the dynasty, would by the mere weight of his name, be an object lesson to those in power."

Emphasized by a skilful commentary from the pen of la Peyrade, this letter was signed by Barbet and Métivier, both tenants of the house in Rue Saint-Dominique, the latter of whom supplied the paper for the journal. Nearly all the shopkeepers formerly patronized by Brigitte, and whom, in view of the election, since her migration, she had still continued to trade with—Thuillier's physician, apothecary, and architect, and finally Phellion's son-in-law, Barniol, who professed

very radical opinions—had likewise signed this letter. As Phellion, he found the statements too pronounced, and alw "without fear as without reproach," although he might h thought that his refusal would injure his son's love affairs he had bravely held aloof.

This trial balloon had the happiest effect; the ten or two names thus pressed to the front were those who (supposed represented the will of the electors and were called "the vo of the quarter." Thus from the start Thuillier's candidat had taken on such proportions that Minard hesitated ab putting his own claims in rivalry.

Brigitte was delighted with the course of events; she r urged that it was high time the marriage was arranged; a Thuillier the more readily coincided in this view of the m ter, as he was constantly in fear of finding himself in a po tion where he would be obliged to pay the sum for which had gone security. A thorough explanation had taken pl between the Provencal and the old maid. She concealed fr him none of the apprehensions she had felt in regard to maintenance of her sovereign authority, when a son-in-law his spirit and character should become established in house; and further said that unless they could agree it w better that he should have his own home, adding: "We sho not be the less friends for that."

La Peyrade replied by telling her that nothing was furt from his thoughts, nothing in the world could induce him consent to such an arrangement; on the contrary, he recko among the chief chances for his future happiness the feel of security he would have that the domestic affairs of household would be so well managed by Brigitte. He wo have enough to do to attend to his outside affairs; and could not understand why he should be supposed to think meddling with matters with which he was entirely un quainted. In short, he so completely reassured her that urged upon him that immediate steps be taken for publication of the banns and the signing of the marri contract. She, herself, was to mention the subject to Céle and see that she agreed to the proposal without demur.

"My dear child," said she one morning, "I think you have given up all thoughts of becoming Félix Phellion's wife. In the first place, he is more an atheist than ever, and, besides, you must have noticed yourself that his mind is unhinged. At Madame Minard's you have seen Madame Marmus, who married a professor, an officer of the Legion of Honor, and even a member of the Institute. There could be no more unhappy woman: her husband has taken her to live at the rear of the Luxembourg, near the Rue Notre-Dame des Champs, in the Rue Duguay-Trouin, a street that is neither paved nor lighted. When he goes out he does not know which way he is walking; he finds himself in the Champ de Mars when he meant going to the Faubourg Poissonnière; he is incapable of even giving his address to a hack-driver; and he is so absent-minded that he doesn't know whether or not he has had his dinner. You can imagine what kind of a time a wife must have with a man who has always got his nose in a glass looking at stars."

"But Félix," said Céleste, "is not as absent-minded as all that."

"Of course not; he's much younger; but by the time he reaches that age both his absence of mind and his atheism will increase; we are all of one accord that he is not a suitable husband for you; your mother, your father, Thuillier, and myself—everybody in the house that has any common sense—have decided, therefore, that you shall take la Peyrade, a man of the world, who will make his own way, who has rendered us very great services, and who, besides, is going to make your godfather deputy. We shall give you on his account a much larger *dot* than we intended giving any other husband. So it must be considered as settled. The banns will be published, and a week from to-day the contract will be signed. There will be a grand dinner for the parents and friends, and then an evening party, when the contract will be signed and your trousseau and presents displayed; and as I intend to manage the affair I can assure you that it will be in style, especially if you do not act like a child, but yield pleasantly to our decision."

"But, Aunt Brigitte," began Céleste, timidly.

"There's no 'but' about it, nor 'ifs' either," replied the old maid, imperiously. "It's all laid out and will be carried through unless, mademoiselle, you think you know more than your relatives."

"I will do as you wish, my aunt," answered Céleste, who felt as though a cloud had burst above her head; she knew only too well that she had not the strength to struggle against the iron will that had just pronounced her doom. She went to pour her griefs into the bosom of her godmother, but Mme. Thuillier advised resignation and patience; the poor child saw there was not even a passive resistance to be looked for in that quarter; her sacrifice was virtually accomplished.

Precipitating herself with frenzy into this new sphere of activity which had come into her life, Brigitte at once entered upon a campaign to prepare the troussseau and purchase the wedding presents. Like all misers who upon grand occasions throw off their old habits and characteristics, the old maid could find nothing beautiful enough, and fairly threw money out of the window; so that up to the day set for signing the contract, the jeweler, the dressmaker, the linen-draper, the milliner, the upholsterer, all chosen from the most fashionable houses, almost lived at Brigitte's house. "It is like a procession," said Joséphine the cook to the Minards' Francoise; "from morning till night the bell is ringing."

The dinner was ordered from Chabot and Potel, not from Chevet; for by doing thus Brigitte set her initiative and proved her emancipation from Mme. de Godollo. The party was to consist of the following: Three Thuilliers, three Collevilles, counting the future bride; la Peyrade, the suitor; Dutocq and Fleury (the manager of the "Écho de la Bièvre"), who had been invited as witnesses, the restricted number of relatives having no choice; Minard and Rabourdin, chosen as witnesses on behalf of Céleste; Madame and Mademoiselle Minard, and Minard junior; two of Thuillier's colleagues in the General Council; the notary Dupuis, who was to draw up the contract; and finally the Abbé Gondrin, Madame Thuil-

lier's and Céleste's confessor, who was to solemnize the marriage. The last of the invited guests was an old vicar of Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas, whose grand elegance of manners and ability as a preacher had led the archbishop to transfer him from the poor parish where he had made his début to the aristocratic Church of the Madeleine. Since his two penitents had again become his parishioners, the young abbé sometimes visited them; and Thuillier, who had gone to explain to him in his own fashion the fitness of the choice he had made in the person of la Peyrade, taking pains to misrepresent the religious views of Félix Phellion, had easily obtained his consent to contribute his smooth and persuasive eloquence to complete the victim's resignation. When the time came to take their places at table three guests were missing—two Minards, father and son, and the notary Dupuis. The latter had written in the morning saying that it was impossible for him to be at the dinner, but that he would arrive with the contract at nine o'clock precisely, and be at the service of Mademoiselle Thuillier. Julian Minard, said his mother, was suffering with a severe sore throat: Minard senior's absence was unexplained by Mme. Minard, but she begged them not to wait for him, as he would assuredly come later. Brigitte on this ordered the soup to be kept hot for him, for, according to the middle-class code of manners, a dinner without soup is not a dinner at all.

The meal was anything but cheerful: the fare was better, but the life and animation which had graced the famous nomination banquet were sadly missing. The absence of three of the guests may have been one cause; then Flavie was very glum; she had had an interview with la Peyrade at her own house which had ended in tears; Céleste, even had she been happy in her choice, could not well, as a matter of propriety, have shown too much joy on her countenance; she made no attempt to brighten a sorrowful face, and dared not look at her godmother, whose appearance looked, so to speak, like one long bleat. The poor girl, seeing this, feared to exchange a look with her, lest she might bring tears to her eyes. Thuil-

lier had now become of such importance that he was stiff and pompous; while Brigitte, finding herself no longer in her own world, where she reigned without a rival, seemed uneasy, awkward, and constrained.

Colleville tried by a few of his facetious remarks to raise the temperature of the assembly, but the coarse flavor of his artist-jests, in the atmosphere in which they were produced, had an effect like a loud laugh in a sick chamber: a mute hint from Thuillier, la Peyrade, and his wife that he should behave himself put a damper on his exuberant turbulence.

Singularly the person who succeeded, aided by Rabourdin, in warming the air was the gravest person in the party. A man of most refined and cultivated intellect, the Abbé Gondrin, like all pure and well-balanced minds, was possessed of a fund of mild gayety, which he had the faculty of communicating to others, and the conversation was becoming animated just as Minard arrived.

After excusing himself on the ground of his official duties, he exchanged a significant look with his wife, which seemed to intimate that he had been detained by some private matter. La Peyrade and Thuillier had received an order for a box for the first representation of the celebrated fairy burlesque of "Love's Telegraph," in which Olympe Cardinal was to make her début, and they were not duped by the story of Julian Minard's indisposition; they therefore exchanged significant glances on perceiving the signals exchanged between the married couple, and wondered if the young gentleman's pot of roses had not been discovered, and whether the task of assuring himself of the escapade of his son the advocate had not detained until this hour the mayor of the eleventh arrondissement.

Being accustomed to pick up the thread of conversation wherever he found it, he tried to hide under a perfect freedom of spirit his parental anxieties.

"Gentlemen," said Minard, as soon as he had swallowed a few mouthfuls, "have you heard the great news?"

"What is that?" asked several voices at once.

"The Academy of Sciences has received to-day the particulars of an extraordinary discovery; the heavens have another star."

"*Tiens!*" said Colleville; "well, that will do to replace that one which Béranger thought had gone from its place, when, to the tune of 'Octavia,' he grieved over Chateaubriand's departure; 'Chateaubriand, why fly your native land?'"

This quotation, which he sang, exasperated Flavie, and, if it had been the custom for wives to sit next their husbands at table, the old first clarionet of the Opera-Comique would not have got off with an imperious and threatening "Colleville!" which called him to order from the distance.

"What will give this meeting which I have the honor of addressing," said Minard, "a special interest in the great astronomical event is that the discoverer lives in the twelfth arrondissement, which a number of you still inhabit or did inhabit for a long period of time. Indeed everything connected with this great scientific fact is most remarkable. The Academy, on reading the communication which announced it, was so convinced of its existence, that at the close of the session a deputation was appointed to visit the domicile of this modern Galileo and compliment him on behalf of the whole body; and yet this new star is not visible either to the eye or through the telescope; it is by the force of reasoning and calculation that its existence and the place it occupies in the heavens are proved beyond all doubt. 'There must be an unknown star in that spot. I cannot see it, but I am sure of it.' That is what this savant said to the Academy, which he at once convinced by his deductions. And do you know, gentlemen, who this Christopher Columbus of the new celestial world is? An old, purblind man, who has difficulty in seeing his way across the street."

"That is admirable! marvelous!" cried several guests, with one accord.

"What is the name of this savant?" asked several voices.

"Monsieur Picot, or, if you prefer, Father Picot, for that is the name everybody gives him in the Rue du Val-de-Grâce,

where he lives; he is simply an old professor of mathematics, who, for the rest, has turned out some first-class pupils—by-the-by, Félix Phellion, whom we all know, studied under him; it was he who, in the name of his old master, read the memorial to the Academy."

At the name of Félix, and remembering the promise to lift her to the sky, which when he said it seemed to savor of lunacy, Céleste looked at Mme. Thuillier, whose face had grown quite animated, and seemed to say to her:

"Courage, my child, all is not lost."

"My dear fellow," said Thuillier to la Peyrade, "Félix is coming here this evening; you try to corner him and obtain the communication; it would be a lucky stroke for our 'Écho' if we could be the first to announce it."

"Oh!" said Minard, volunteering a reply, "it would just absorb public curiosity, for it will make an immense sensation. The deputation, not finding Monsieur Picot at home, returned to the office of the minister of public instruction; at once the minister hastened off to the Tuileries, and the *Messager*, in an early evening extra, announces that Monsieur Picot is nominated a chevalier of the Legion of Honor and is granted a pension of eighteen hundred francs from the fund for the encouragement of the sciences and letters."

"There," said Thuillier, "is a Cross well bestowed."

"But a pension of eighteen hundred francs," said Dutocq, "seems to me a small affair."

"Certainly," said Thuillier, "seeing that this money, after all, comes from the taxpayers, and when we see it wasted on any one recommended by the coterie (*camarilla*)——"

"Eighteen hundred francs," replied Minard, "is something, however; especially for a scholar. These people have few wants, and are accustomed to live upon very little."

"I rather think," said la Peyrade, "that the worthy Monsieur Picot has not been well cared for; for just at this time his family, after failing to get a commission in lunacy, are trying to have trustees appointed. They claim that he is being robbed by a servant who lives with him. *Parbleu!*

Thuillier, you know her; it is that woman who came the other day to the office, and who had been led to think that Dupuis, the notary, had gone off with some funds of hers."

"Yes, yes, very well," said Thuillier, significantly; "yes, you are right, I do know her."

"It's queer," said Brigitte, improving the occasion to emphasize the argument she had had with Céleste about the absence of mind of Marmus, the mathematician, "that all these savants, outside of their learning, are good for nothing, and that, when they are at home, they have to be cared for like children."

"That proves," said the Abbé Gondrin, "how greatly they are absorbed in their studies; but at the same time they possess an artlessness of nature which is most touching."

"When they are not as perverse as donkeys," replied Brigitte, testily. "As for me, Monsieur l'Abbé, I can tell you that, if ever I thought of marrying, a professor would not suit me. In the first place, what do these savants work at? At stupidities the most part of their time; for here you are all admiring the discovery of a star, and what good will that do any of us? For my part, I think we have plenty of stars already."

"Bravo! Brigitte," said Colleville, again forgetting himself; "you are right, my girl, and, like you, I think the man who should discover a new dish would deserve better of mankind."

"Colleville," said Flavie, "I must say that your remarks are in the worst possible taste."

"My dear demoiselle," said the Abbé Gondrin, addressing Brigitte, "you might be right if man consisted of matter only, and if there were not bound to our body a soul having instincts and cravings that need to be satisfied. Now I think this sense of the infinite which dwells within us, and which each in his own way endeavors to satisfy, is wonderfully helped by the searchings of astronomy, that from time to time reveals to us new worlds which the hand of the Creator has strewn through space. The infinite within you finds another

outlet; this passion for the welfare of those about you, this warm affection, so ardent, so devoted, which you feel for your excellent brother, are at once the manifestations of the aspirations which have nothing of the material in them, which in seeking their end and object will never ask: 'What good is all this? What is the use of that?' Again, I must assure you that the stars are not without their uses, as you would seem to suppose; without these, navigators would be seriously impeded in their steering across the seas; they would be puzzled how to bring from distant lands the vanilla which has served to flavor this delicious cream which you have made, and which I am now eating. So, as Monsieur Colleville observed, there is much affinity between a dish and a star; we should decry no person, neither astronomers nor good housekeepers."

The abbé was interrupted by a noise of loud altercation in the antechamber.

"I tell you I will go in," shouted a voice.

"No, monsieur, you shall not go in," replied the "male" domestic. "They are at table, I tell you; no one should force his way into a private house."

Thuillier turned pale; since the seizure of the pamphlet, he fancied all unexpected visits betokened the advent of the police.

Among the various social dogmas laid down by Mme. de Godollo for Brigitte's guidance, the one that had needed the oftenest repeating was never, as mistress of the house, to rise from the table unless it was intended as the signal for retiring; but present circumstances seemed to give amnesty to the injunction.

"I'll go and see what it all means," she said to Thuillier quickly, as she noted his uneasiness. "What is it?" she asked the servant, when she reached the scene of the conflict.

"Here is a gentleman who is determined to come in; he says no one dines at eight o'clock."

"But who are you, monsieur?" said Brigitte to an old man strangely attired, and whose eyes were protected by a green shade.

"Madame, I am neither a beggar nor a vagabond," replied the old man in a sonorous voice. "I am professor of mathematics, by name Picot."

"Rue du Val-de-Grâce?" asked Brigitte.

"Yes, madame, No. 9, next door to the fruit store."

"Come in, monsieur, come in, we are only too happy to receive you," cried Thuillier, who, hearing the name, had hurried out to meet the savant.

"He arrives like *Mars en calèche,*" said Colleville, deranging a proverb in Léon de Lora's style.

"*Hein!* you scamp," said the savant, turning to where the servant had been standing when he entered, but who had retired when he saw everything was amicably settled.

Père Picot was a tall, spare man, with a severe, angular face, which, in spite of the softening effect of a blond wig with heavy curls, and the pacific green shade previously spoken of, had a truculent and surly cast, and which hard study had ornamented with a surface of sickly pallor. He had given proof of his snappish, quarrelsome mind before entering the dining-room, where every one rose to receive him.

His costume consisted of a large frock-coat, something between an overcoat and a dressing-gown; under this was a big vest of iron-gray cloth, fastened from the throat to the pit of the stomach with a double row of buttons, huzzar style, and looking like a breast-plate. His trousers, though October was near its close, were of black lasting, and gave testimony to long wear by dull-looking patches breaking the shining surface caused by wear, and a rough darn covered one knee. But, by daylight, his most striking feature was a pair of Patagonian feet, imprisoned in beaver cloth slippers, which, being molded upon the mountainous excrescences of gigantic bunions, made one involuntarily think of a dromedary or an advanced case of elephantiasis.

When he was installed on the chair eagerly placed for him, and the company had resumed their seats at the table, amid the silence born of curiosity:

"Where is he," cried the old man, in a voice of thunder,

"the villain, the scoundrel? Bring him forth, let me hear his voice."

"To whom do you refer, my dear sir?" asked Thuillier, in a conciliatory voice, in which was a slight tone of patronage.

"A scamp whom I could not find at his residence, monsieur, and they informed me that he was at this house. I am, I believe, in the home of Monsieur Thuillier, member of Council, Place de la Madeleine, first floor above the entresol?"

"Precisely, monsieur," replied Thuillier; "and allow me to add, monsieur, that we are all your respectful sympathizers."

"And you will permit me, I hope," said Minard, "as the mayor of the adjoining arrondissement to that in which you reside, to congratulate myself in being present in the company of Monsieur Picot, the one who doubtless has just immortalized his name by the discovery of a star."

"Yes, monsieur," replied the professor, raising once more the stentorian diapason of his voice, "I am Picot (Népomucène), the one you speak of, but I have discovered no star—I do not trouble myself with these fads. My eyes are very weak; that insolent rascal is making me ridiculous with that hoax. I don't find him here; he is in hiding, the coward, and dare not sniffle a word before my face."

"Who is this person you are so annoyed with?" was asked of the enraged old man by a number of voices.

"An unnatural pupil," replied the old mathematician; "a good-for-nothing—a man of parts, though—his name is Félix Phellion."

This name was heard with amazement, as may be imagined. Finding the situation so funny, Colleville and la Peyrade shouted with laughter.

"You laugh, wretch," cried the irate old man, rising from his seat; "just come and laugh within the length of my arm."

And brandishing an enormous rattan with a china knob, which he used as a guiding cane, he nearly knocked over on to Mme. Minard's head a heavy candelabrum which was placed on the table.

"You are mistaken, monsieur," said Brigitte, seizing his arm in the nick of time, "Monsieur Félix Phellion is not here. He will most likely be here at our reception, somewhat later, but he has not yet arrived."

"Your receptions don't begin very early," said the old man, "it is past eight o'clock. However, as Monsieur Félix will come later, you will permit me to wait for him. You were eating dinner, I think; pray don't allow me to disturb you."

And he quietly sat down.

"Since you have no objection, monsieur, we will keep on, or rather finish, for we have reached the dessert. May I offer you anything?" asked Brigitte; "a glass of champagne and a biscuit?"

"You are very kind, madame," replied the old man; "one never refuses champagne, and I can always eat between meals; you dine very late, though."

A place was found for him at the table between Colleville and Mme. Minard; the musician filled the glass of his new neighbor, before whom was placed a dish of little cakes.

"Monsieur," said la Peyrade, in a wheedling voice, "you must have seen how surprised we were to hear you complain of Monsieur Félix Phellion; such a gentle young man, so inoffensive. What has he really done to you that your indignation is so great?"

His mouth full of pastry, which he was consuming at a rate which caused Brigitte much agitation, the professor signed that he would give an answer presently. Then, mistaking his glass and gulping down the contents of Colleville's:

"What has that insolent fellow done to me?" he replied. "What he deserves hanging for, the miserable thing—and not for the first time, either. He knows that I cannot endure stars, and for good cause. In 1807, being attached to the Bureau of Longitudes, I took part in a scientific expedition that was sent to Spain under the direction of my friend and colleague, Jean-Baptiste Biot, to determine the arc of the meridian from Barcelona to the Balearic Isles. I was just observing a star, perhaps the very star my rogue of a pupil

has discovered, when suddenly, war in the meantime having broken out between France and Spain, the peasants, seeing me perched with a telescope at the top of Mont Galazzo, imagined that I was signaling to the enemy. An infuriated rabble smashed my instruments and talked of stringing me up; I should have been finished if the captain of a ship had not taken me prisoner and thrust me into the citadel of Belver, where I spent three years in dire captivity. Since that time, as you may well believe, I have let the whole celestial system alone; though I was, without being aware of the fact, the first to observe the famous comet of 1811. I should have said nothing about it, but Monsieur Flauguergues was so foolish as to publish it. Like all my pupils, Phellion knows my declared aversion to the stars, and he knew right well that the best trick that he could play upon me would be to saddle one on my back. So that deputation that went through the farce of coming to compliment me was more than lucky in not finding me at home, for, if they had, the respected gentlemen the academicians, and all the Academy included, would have passed a bad quarter of an hour."

Everybody found the greatest pleasure in this singular monomania of the old mathematician. Only la Peyrade was beginning to understand the part played by Félix, and he was vexed that he had insisted on the explanation.

"Still, Monsieur Picot," said Minard, "if Félix Phellion is only guilty of crediting you with this discovery, it seems to me that his indiscretion has been compensated to some extent; the Cross of the Legion of Honor, a pension, and the glory that will accrue to your name."

"The Cross and the pension I take," said the old man, emptying his glass, which to the great horror of Brigitte he replaced upon the table with such force as to break the stem. "For twenty years the government has owed me them, not for discovering stars, either (things that I have always scorned), but for my celebrated treatise on 'Differential Logarithms,' which Kepler thought proper to term monologarithms, a sequel to Napier's tables; for my 'Postulatum'

of Euclid, which I was the first to solve; but, above all, for my theory of 'Perpetual Motion,' four volumes, octavo, with plates: Paris, 1825. You can thus see, monsieur, that to give me glory is to pour water into the river. I had so little need of Monsieur Phellion to make me a position in the scientific world, that a long time ago I turned him out of my house in disgrace."

"Then this is not the first star that he has thrust upon you for a joke?" asked Colleville, flippantly.

"He did worse than that," cried the old man; "he has tarnished my fame. My theory of 'Perpetual Motion,' the printing of which cost me my all, when it should have been printed at the government printing-office, was enough to have made my fortune and render me immortal. Well, that wretch of a Félix hindered it all. From time to time, pretending that he knew my publisher: 'Father Picot,' he would say (the young sycophant), 'here are five hundred francs, or fifteen crowns, or, as it was one time, two thousand francs, which the publisher gave me for you, for your book is selling finely.' This went on for years, and my publisher, who was in the conspiracy, would say to me when I went to his place: 'Oh! yes, it is not doing so badly, it fairly *bubbles;* we shall soon get through the first edition.' I didn't suspect anything, and of course pocketed the money: I thought to myself: 'My book is to their taste, the idea will make its way; from day to day I may expect that some capitalist will come forward and propose to apply my system to——'"

"The 'Absorption of Liquids'?" asked Colleville, who had been constantly engaged in filling the old lunatic's glass.

"No, monsieur, my theory of 'Perpetual Motion,' 4 vols. in 4to, with plates: Paris, 1825. But, bah! days passed and nobody ever came; so, thinking my publisher was not energetic enough, I tried to arrange for a second edition with another publisher. This it was, monsieur, that enabled me to discover the whole plot, and I turned the serpent out of doors. In six years there had been only nine copies sold; kept lulled in false security, I had done nothing to push my

book, which had been left to take care of itself; thus was I the victim of jealousy and the blackest malice, and was unjustly despoiled of the value of my labors."

"But," said Minard, who had constituted himself the mouthpiece of the company, "may we not regard this as an act equally delicate and ingenious to——"

"To give me alms, is that what you mean?" interrupted the old man with a roar that made Mlle. Minard jump in her chair; "to humiliate me, dishonor me—me, his old tutor: do I need the aid of charity? Has Picot—I, Népomucène—to whom his wife brought a dowry of one hundred thousand francs, ever held his hand out to anybody? But nowadays nothing is respected; old fellows, as they call us, our religion, our good faith is taken advantage of, so that the younger generation may say to the public: 'You see plainly that these old dotards are good for nothing. It needs us, the young generation, the modern men, us, Young France, to step in and bring them up by hand.' You hobbledehoy, you try to feed me! But these old dotards have more knowledge in their little finger than you have in your whole brain; you will never be worth as much as us, miserable little intriguers as you are. As for that matter, I can wait for my revenge: that young Phellion is bound to come to a bad end; that which he did to-day, reading before the full board at the Academy a statement in my name, was nothing less than forgery, and the law punishes forgery with the galleys."

"Quite true," said Colleville, "the forgery of a public star."*

Brigitte trembled for her glassware, and her nerves tingled at the slaughter of cakes and pastry, so she gave the signal to return to the salon; moreover she had heard the bell ring many times, announcing that some of those invited to the reception had already arrived. They wished first to transship (*transbordier*) the old man, and Colleville politely offered his arm to the professor.

"No, monsieur," said he, "permit me to stay here. I am

* It is impossible to produce the pun in English.

not dressed for a reception, and, besides, a strong light injures my eyes. Then, I have no fancy to make an exhibition of myself: it will be best that the explanation between myself and my pupil should take place between 'four eyes,' as the saying goes."

"Very well, let him remain, then," said Brigitte to Colleville.

No one insisted; the old man, all unconsciously, had uncrowned himself in the opinion of the guests. But the thrifty housewife, before leaving him, removed everything of a fragile nature from within his reach; then, by way of a slight recompense:

"Will you take coffee?" she asked.

"I'll take it, madame," replied old Picot, "and some cognac, too."

"Bless my life! he takes everything," said Brigitte to the "male" domestic. And she advised him to "keep an eye on the old fool."

When Brigette reëntered the salon she found the Abbé Gondrin the centre of a great circle embracing nearly every one present; as she approached she heard him say:

"I thank heaven for having granted me such happiness. Never have I felt such an emotion as that aroused by the scene in which we have just participated; even the somewhat burlesque form of the confidence, certainly very artless, for it was wholly involuntary, but adds to the glory of the astounding generosity revealed to us. Placed by my sacred calling in the way of learning of many charities, often also either the witness or intermediary of kindly actions, I think that never in my life before have I met with a so touching or more ingenious devotion. Keeping the left hand in ignorance of the things of the right is a great step in Christianity; but to go far as to rob one's self of one's own fame to benefit another under such singular circumstances, with every risk of being told he lied, of being despised and repulsed, is the gospel applied in its highest precepts; it is being more than a sister of charity, it is worthy the apostle of benevolence. I would

that I knew this noble young man, that I might shake him by the hand."

Her arm passed through that of her godmother, Céleste was standing near the priest. Her ear heard every word, and as he talked of and analyzed Félix's generous conduct, she clung more closely to Mme. Thuillier's arm, saying in a low voice:

"You hear, godmother, you hear!"

To destroy the inevitable effect which this eulogy would have on Céleste:

"Unfortunately, Monsieur l'Abbé," said Thuillier, "this young man whom you eulogize so highly is not unknown to you. I have had before now occasion to speak of him to you, regretting that we had found it impossible to carry out certain plans we had arranged in connection with him; I allude to the very compromising attitude he affects in his religious opinions."

"Oh! is that the young man?" said the abbé; "you surprise me greatly; I must say that I should not have formed such an idea."

"You will see him presently, Monsieur l'Abbé," said la Peyrade, "and if you question him on certain points you will have no difficulty in discovering the ravages that the pride of science can exercise in the most happily tempered souls."

"I am afraid I shall not see him," said the abbe, "as my black robe would be out of place in the midst of the fashionable splendor that will soon fill this drawing-room. But, as I know, Monsieur la Peyrade, that you are a man of sincere religious convictions, and as you doubtless feel an interest in that young man's welfare, as I do myself, I just say to you in parting: Do not be uneasy about him; soon or late such elect souls always come back to us, and, if the return of these prodigals may be long delayed, I should not despair of seeing them going to God, or that His infinite mercy would fail them."

As he spoke the abbé looked around for his hat, intending to slip quietly away; just as he thought it possible to be done unnoticed, he was accosted by Minard:

"Monsieur," said the Mayor of the Eleventh, "permit me to press your hand and thank you for the felicitous words of tolerance that have fallen from your lips. Oh! if all priests were like you, religion would soon be victorious. I am at this moment in domestic trouble, and have to decide on a line of conduct about which I should be glad to have your advice and to invoke the assistance of your enlightened judgment."

"Whenever you please, monsieur," replied the abbé; "Rue de la Madeleine, No. 8, in rear of the Cité Berryer; after six o'clock mass, I am generally in the whole morning."

As soon as the abbé had gone, taking Mme. Minard aside:

"Well, it is true," said Minard, "and the anonymous letter does not misinform us. Monsieur Julian is keeping an actress from Bobino's; it was to be present at her début at the Folies-Dramatiques that he made a pretence of being sick. The porter's wife is on bad terms with the creature's mother, an old fish-hawker, and for a hundred sous crown-piece she gave me the full account. This evening I shall have a serious explanation with monsieur my son."

"My dear," said Mme. Minard, theatrically, "I implore you to take no violent steps."

"Take care," said Minard; "everybody can see us. I have just asked the Abbé Gondrin to give us the benefit of his advice; we may scout the priests when all goes well, but when trouble comes——"

"But, my dear, you take the matter too seriously; he is but young."

"Yes," said Minard, "but there are things that cannot be overlooked. The son of a family in the hands of women like her is disreputable; it is the ruin of his family. You don't know, Zélie, what these actresses are. They are Phrynes of the most dangerous species, and if a young man belongs to the middle classes they take especial pleasure in ruining him. They say that our money earned in trade is but stolen; that it is gained by adulteration and trickery; they empty our pockets, as they claim, to make us disgorge. How unfortunate

that I do not know where to find Madame de Godollo, s
an experienced woman of the world, and would have bee
good counselor."

All at once a terrific uproar put a stopper on this conju
aside. Into the dining-room rushed Brigitte, whence ca
the sound of falling furniture and crashing glass; there
found Colleville engaged in rearranging his cravat and ass
ing himself that his coat, crumpled and dragged out of sha
had not one or more rents in it.

"What's the matter?" asked Brigitte.

"Why, this old fool," said Colleville, "is gone crazy.
came here to take my coffee in his company, and, at a lit
joke I made, he flew into so violent a passion that he sei
me by the collar, overthrew in the struggle two or three chai
and a tray of glasses carried by Josephine, who was not a
to get out of his way in time."

"It's all because you've been teasing him," said Brigit
crossly; "you would have done better to stay in the salon
stead of coming in here to play your jokes, as you call it, e
You always think that you are in the orchestra of the Ope
Comique."

With this sharp speech, Brigitte, resolute woman that
was, felt that she must get rid of this ferocious old man w
threatened her household with fire and blood. She approac
old Picot, who was tranquilly amusing himself by burn
brandy in his saucer.

"Monsieur," she cried at the top of her voice, as if she w
speaking to a deaf person (she evidently thought a blind
needed the same treatment); "I am here to tell you so
thing which you will not like. Monsieur and Madame Ph
lion are now here and inform us that Monsieur Félix, th
son, is not coming." And using the story which had serv
the turn of Julian Minard, she added, "He was seized t
evening with a sore throat and hoarseness."

"Which he got by reading *that* paper," cried the old p
fessor, joyfully. "Well, that is justice. Madame, where
you purchase your brandy?"

"From my grocer, of course," said Brigitte, taken aback at the question.

"Well, madame, I think you ought to know that in a house where one can get such excellent champagne, which reminds me of that we used to quaff at the table of de Fontane, grand master of the University, it is shameful to keep such brandy. With the same frankness I put into everything, I tell you plainly that it is only fit to wash your horses' feet in; if I had had the chance to burn it——"

"He must be the devil in person," said Brigitte; "not a word to excuse himself about all that glass, and now scolds about my brandy! Monsieur," said she, in the same raised diapason, "Monsieur Félix is not coming; I think your family will be anxious at your long absence, eh?"

"Family, madame; I have no family, as they want to make out to be a lunatic; however, I have a housekeeper, Madame Lambert; I think she will be surprised at my being so long away; and I ask nothing better than to be permitted to join her. The longer I tarry the more violent will be the scene; but I must confess that I am not sure I can find my way in this strange quarter."

"Then take a hack."

"A hack to go, a hack to come; this would be an excellent chance for my relatives to say I am a spendthrift," said the testy old fellow.

"I have an important message to send into your quarter," said Brigitte, who found it was necessary to bear the cost; "my porter is about taking a hack there—if you would care to take advantage of that——"

"I accept, madame," said the old professor, rising; "if it comes to the worst you can testify before my judges for me that I was too niggardly to pay for hack hire."

"Henri," said Brigitte to her domestic, "take monsieur to the house of Monsieur Paseul, the janitor, and tell him to do the errand I told him about; also to take monsieur to his own door and be careful of him."

"Be careful! be careful!" said the old man, refusing the

arm of the servant; "what do you take me for, madame, a trunk or a piece of cracked china?"

Seeing that she had got her man fairly to the door, Brigitte gave her mind free vent:

"What I said, monsieur, is for your own good; and permit me to remark that you are not of the most agreeable disposition."

"Be careful," repeated the old man; "but you, perhaps, don't know, madame, that it is words like that that brings a commission in lunacy? However, I won't be too rude in return for your hospitality, the more so that I have been able to put Monsieur Félix, who has purposely missed me, in his right place."

"Get out, you old brute; get out," said Brigitte, shutting the door behind him.

The restraint she had placed upon herself compelled her to drink a whole glass of water before returning to the salon; this obstreperous guest had given her "quite a turn," to use her own expression.

The next morning Minard was shown into Phellion's study. The great citizen and his son Félix were absorbed in an interesting conversation.

"My dear Félix," said the Mayor of the Eleventh, shaking hands heartily with the young professor, "it is you that brings me here this morning; I come to offer you my congratulations."

"What has happened, then?" asked Phellion; "have the Thuilliers at last——"

"It has nothing to do with the Thuilliers," interrupted the mayor. "But," he added, looking at Félix, "you don't mean to tell me that that sly-boots has kept the matter even from you?"

"I do not think," said the great citizen, "that my son has ever hidden aught from me."

"So, then, you know all about the sublime astronomical discovery which he has communicated to the Academy of Sciences?"

"Your kindly feeling for me, Monsieur le Maire," said Félix, quickly, "has misled you; I was but the reader, not the author, of the paper."

"Oh! be quiet!" said Minard, "the reader only! all is known."

"But, see," said Félix, offering Minard the "Constitutionnel," "here's the newspaper, which announces the discoverer to be Monsieur Picot; not only so, but it mentions the rewards, without the loss of a moment, that have been bestowed upon him by the government."

"Félix is right," said Phellion, "that is a faithful journal; I think the government has acted in this with commendable promptitude."

"But, my dear commander, I repeat that the secret is out; your son is shown to be a most admirable fellow. Placing to the account of his old professor his own discovery so as to obtain for him the favors of the authorities,—I certainly do not know of any finer trait in all antiquity."

"Félix," said Phellion, testifying some emotion, "the immense labor to which you have devoted yourself so persistently, those never-ceasing visits to the Observatory——"

"But, my father, Monsieur Minard has been misinformed."

"Misinformed!" repeated Minard, "when the whole business was made known by Monsieur Picot himself."

At this statement, made in such a way as to preclude all doubt, the truth began to dawn upon Phellion.

"Félix, my son," he cried, rising to embrace him.

But he was compelled to sit down again; his legs refused to support him, he became pale, and his nature, usually so impassible, seemed ready to give way under this sudden happy shock.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Félix, alarmed, "he is ill; ring for help, I beg you, Monsieur Minard."

At the same time he rushed to the old man, rapidly loosened his cravat and collar, and slapped his hands. But this faintness was only temporary, he was soon himself again; Phellion pressed his son to his breast and there held him for some time; then, in a voice broken with emotion:

"Félix, my noble son," said he, "so large of heart, so great in mind."

The bell had meanwhile been given a resounding peal by the magisterial hand; the whole household was on its feet.

"It is nothing, nothing," said Phellion, dismissing the servants, who had rushed in. But at the same moment he caught sight of his wife, who had entered with the others, and resumed his habitual solemnity:

"Madame Phellion," said he, pointing to Félix, "how many years is it since you brought that young man into the world?"

Mme. Phellion, bewildered by the question, hesitated for a moment before replying:

"Twenty-five years next January."

"Have you not thought," continued Phellion, "up to this time that God has amply gratified your maternal longings by making this child an honest man, a dutiful son, and one gifted as a mathematician, the science of sciences?"

"Undoubtedly," said Mme. Phellion, understanding less and less at what her husband was driving.

"Well," went on Phellion, "you owe heaven an additional meed of thanks for granting that you should become mother of a genius; those toils, which so lately we condemned and from which we feared the loss of our boy's reason, formed the rough and steep path by which men attain fame."

"*Ah çá!*" said Mme. Phellion, "don't you think it would be as well if you would explain yourself?"

"Monsieur, your son," said Minard, being more cautious this time in administering the happiness he was about to bestow, and fearing another new fainting-fit of joy, "has just made an important astronomical discovery."

"Truly?" said Mme. Phellion, going up to Félix and taking him by both hands and gazing at him lovingly.

"When I say important," continued Minard, "I only try to spare your maternal emotions; it is a great, a bewildering discovery, as I said. He is but twenty-five, yet his name is already immortal."

"And this is the man," said Mme. Phellion, effusively em-

bracing her son Félix, "to whom that la Peyrade is preferred!"

"They do not prefer him, madame," said Minard, "for the Thuilliers are not the dupe of that intriguer; but he has become necessary to them. Thuillier thinks that by his means he can become a deputy. The election is not yet won; they are sacrificing Céleste in gaining it."

"But that is atrocious," said Mme. Phellion, "to consider his ambition before his child's happiness."

"Ah!" said Minard, "Céleste is not their child; she is their adopted daughter."

"Yes, on Brigitte's side," said Mme. Phellion; "but on the side of Handsome Thuillier——"

"My dear," said Phellion, "no recriminations; the good God has sent us much comfort. Besides, that marriage, about which I regret to see Félix does not behave with his customary philosophy, may still not take place."

Félix shook his head incredulously.

"Yes," said Minard, observing this, "the commander is right. Last evening, when the contract was to be signed, a hitch occurred. You were not present, by-the-by; your absence was remarked."

"We were invited," said Phellion, "but at the last moment we had hesitated about going; we felt that we should be placed in an equivocal position, and then Félix was overcome with excitement and fatigue—which it is now apparent was caused by reading his essay before the Academy. It would have been bad form to go without him, so we acted wisely, and absented ourselves."

The presence of the man whom he had come to pronounce immortal did not prevent Minard, when the chance was thus presented, of rolling under his tongue that most tender morsel of the middle-classes—gossip.

"Figure to yourself," said he, "the most extraordinary things that occurred at the Thuilliers' last night, one succeeding the other." Then he started off with the amusing episode of old Picot's visit, following this by the warm approval

given to Félix by the Abbé Gondrin and the desire expressed by the young preacher of meeting him.

"I'll call on him," said Félix; "do you know where he resides?"

"Rue de la Madeleine, No. 8," replied Minard; "I have just this minute left him. I saw him on a most delicate matter, and his advice was shrewd and charitable. But that was not the great event of the evening. Every one was present to hear the contract read; they waited in expectation of the notary for a full hour, but he never came."

"Then the contract was not signed," said Félix eagerly.

"Not even read, my friend. All at once some one came in to say that the notary had started for Brussels."

"Undoubtedly on more urgent business," said Phellion, innocently.

"Much more urgent," replied Minard; "a little bankruptcy of five hundred thousand francs, which the gentleman skipped."

"But who is this public officer," demanded Phellion, "so recreant to his trust, as, in this scandalous manner, to forego the sacred duties of his calling?"

"Think now! your neighbor, on the Rue St. Jacques, the notary Dupuis."

"What!" said Mme. Phellion, "so pious a man as he? Why he is the parish churchwarden."

"Ah! madame," said Minard, "it is just those very people who set the fastest pace; he is not the only one."

"Tell us all about it," said Mme. Phellion, with animation.

"Well, it seems," Minard went on, "that this canting swindler had the savings of a number of servants placed in his hands, and that Monsieur la Peyrade—you see they are all in a clique, these pious folk—was charged with the duty of recruiting clients for him among that class."

"I always said that Provençal," interrupted Mme. Phellion, "was a worthless fellow."

"Recently," replied the mayor, "he had placed with Dupuis the savings of an old housekeeper, herself one of the pious,

amounting to quite a nice little sum; my faith! it was worth the trouble—twenty-five thousand francs, if you please; this housekeeper, named Madame Lambert——"

"Madame Lambert," interrupted Félix, in his turn; "but that is M. Picot's housekeeper—scrimpy cap, a pale, thin face, shows no hair, always speaks with lowered eyes?"

"That's the very woman, a true picture of a hypocrite," said Minard.

"Twenty-five thousand francs of savings!" said Félix; "I am no longer astonished that poor old Picot is always pinched."

"So that some one had to meddle with the sale of his books," said Minard, slyly. "Well, however that may be, you can imagine that she was in a dreadful state when she heard of the notary's flight. She went at once to la Peyrade's lodgings; there they told her that he was dining and spending the evening with the Thuilliers, whose address they gave her in such a bungling manner that she ran about all the evening; arriving there at ten o'clock, when all the gaping company sat wondering what next to do, neither Brigitte nor Thuillier having sense enough to redeem such an awkward position; I can tell you we all missed the finesse of Madame de Godollo and the talent of Madame Phellion——"

"You are too polite, Monsieur le Maire," said Mme. Phellion, primly.

"Finally," resumed Minard, "about ten o'clock the Lambert woman arrived at the anteroom of Môsieur the councilor-general, and demanded in an excited manner to speak with Monsieur the advocate."

"Quite naturally," said Phellion, "he was the agent, and the woman had the right to question him."

"You should just have seen the Tartuffe," continued Minard. "He had scarcely left the room when he returned with the news. As everybody was anxious to be going, there was a general stampede. Then what does our man do? He goes back to Madame Lambert, whom he had left in the ante-room, and who never ceased crying that she was ruined! she was

lost!—which, of course, may have been true, but might also merely have been a scene carefully arranged between them—before all the guests in the ante-chamber, who had been disturbed by this servant's clamors. 'Reassure yourself, my worthy woman,' said the editor-in-chief of the 'Écho de la Bièvre,' solemnly; 'the investment was made at your own request; consequently, I owe you nothing; but it is sufficient that as the money passed through my hands my conscience tells me that I am responsible; if the assignees of the notary do not realize enough, I will pay you in full.'"

"That is right," said Phellion. "As I said a moment ago, the agent should be responsible. I should have acted just as Monsieur la Peyrade did. Such upright conduct cannot be termed Jesuitism."

"You! why, certainly you would have acted the same, so should I," said Minard; "but we should not have performed it to the sound of a brass band, but have paid it quietly, like gentlemen. But with what will this election manipulator pay? Out of the bride's dowry!"

At this moment entered the little servant boy, who handed a letter to Félix Phellion. It was from Father Picot, written from his dictation by Madame Lambert, for which reason we will not reproduce the orthography.

The handwriting of madame was of that style which is never forgotten when once seen. Félix recognized it at once.

"It is a letter from the professor," said he, and before breaking the seal he said:

"With your permission, Monsieur le Mayor."

"He is after you," said Minard. "I never saw anything so amusing as his rage last night."

On reading it Félix smiled. When he had finished he passed the letter to his father.

"You may read it aloud," he said.

Phellion took the letter, and in his solemn voice:

"My dear Félix," began the great citizen, "I have just received your note; it arrived in the nick of time, for they tell me that I

was in a rage with you. You say that in being guilty of abusing my confidence (for which I propose to give you a good dressing), in order to give a knockout blow to my family by showing that a man who was capable of making the elaborate calculations necessary for this discovery you have made was not by any means the man to be accounted a lunatic, and to have his affairs controlled by others. This argument pleases me, it is such an excellent answer to the infamous proceedings taken against me by my relations; I must commend you for thinking of it. But you sold that idea pretty dear in making me the colleague and comrade of a star, when you know very well that I desire no such acquaintance. It is not at my age and when I have solved the great problem of 'perpetual motion,' that a man should trouble himself about such trumpery rubbish; all right for such gabies and sucking-scientists as yourself; that is just what I said to the Minister of Instruction this morning, by whom I must acknowledge I was received with great urbanity. I asked him whether, as he had made a mistake and sent them to the wrong address, he ought not to take back his Cross and his pension, though I certainly deserved them for other things.

"'The government,' answered the minister, 'is not in the habit of making mistakes; what it does, it always does well; it never annuls an ordinance given under the hand of his Majesty: your excellent work has well merited the two favors granted by the King; it is an old debt, I am only too pleased to pay it off in his name.'

"'But Félix?' I said; 'for after all, for a young man, it was not such a bad discovery.'

"'Monsieur Félix Phellion,' the minister replied, 'will to-day receive his appointment as chevalier of the Legion of Honor; the King will sign the order this morning; it happens, too, that just now there is a vacancy in the Academy of Sciences, and if you are not a candidate——'

"'I in the Academy!' I interrupted, with the frankness of speech you know so well, 'I execrate all the academies; they are wet blankets, assemblies of idlers, stores with fine signs and nothing to sell.'

"'Well,' said the minister, smiling, 'I think at the first election M. Félix Phellion has every chance in his favor, including the influence of the government as far as it can be loyally and legitimately given.'

'There, my poor boy, this is all that I have been able to do to-

day to reward you for your good intentions and to prove that I no longer bear malice. I think my relations will wear a rather long face. Come and talk it over with me as soon as possible, say about four o'clock—for I don't dine to-morrow morning, as I saw a lot of folk doing last night in a house where I took occasion to speak of your talent in a manner much to your advantage. Mme. Lambert, who can handle a pan better than a pen, will distinguish herself, although it is Friday, and you know she never lets me off on a fast day; but she promises me a dinner for an archbishop, with a half-bottle of champagne, which if required can be doubled, to christen the ribbon. Your old professor and friend,

"Picot,

"Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

"P. S.—Is it possible to obtain from your worthy mother a little flask of that excellent old cognac that you once gave me? Not a drop is left, and yesterday I was compelled to drink some that wasn't good enough to wash a horse's feet in; I did not hesitate to so inform the charming Hebe who served me."

"Certainly, yes, he shall have some," said Mme. Phellion; "and not a flask only, but a *litre*."

"And I," said Minard, "who pique myself on having some not too moth-eaten, will also send him a few bottles; but pray don't let him know from whom it came, Monsieur le Chevalier, who I hope will allow me to be his sponsor, for there is no saying how this eccentric man may take things."

"Wife," said Phellion, suddenly, "bring me a white cravat and a black coat. Monsieur the Mayor will excuse me, if I leave him."

"Where are you going?" said Madame Phellion; "to the minister's to thank him?"

"Bring me those articles of dress; I have an important visit to make. Monsieur the Mayor will excuse me."

"I must be going myself," said Minard, "for I have some business with monsieur my son, who has *not* discovered a star."

Questioned in vain by Félix and his wife, Phellion hastened to dress, put on a pair of white gloves, sent for a hack, and

half-an-hour after found himself in the presence of Brigitte, who was superintending the careful putting away of the china, glass, and silver used the previous night. Interrupting her household labors to receive her visitor, the old maid said:

"Well, Papa Phellion, you gave us the slip yesterday; you had a keener nose than the others. Do you know the trick the notary played us?"

"I know all," said Phellion, "and the unexpected check you have received in the execution of your projects is what I shall take as my text for the important conversation which I wish to have with you. At times it seems as though Providence took pleasure in counteracting our best-devised plans; sometimes it seems also to indicate that we tend too much to the wrong path, and the obstacles it puts in our way are apparently meant to lead us to reflection."

"Providence! Providence!" said the strong-minded Brigitte, "it seems to me has something else to do than look after us."

"That is one opinion," replied Phellion, "but I have often seen its decrees in the little as in the great things of life; and certainly if it had permitted the fulfilment of your arrangements with M. de la Peyrade to have been begun as intended, you would not have seen me here."

"Then," said Brigitte, "you think that the notary having defaulted, the marriage will not take place, eh? But for lack of a monk the abbey did not close."

"My dear lady," said the great citizen, "you will do me the justice to acknowledge that neither my wife nor myself has attempted at any time to influence your decision; we have allowed the young people to love each other without troubling ourselves as to where such attachment might lead and——"

"To upsetting their minds," interrupted Brigitte; "that is just what love does, and that is why I have kept clear of it."

"What you remark is indeed true as regards my unhappy son," replied Phellion; "for, notwithstanding the lofty occu-

pations by which he has tried to distract his thoughts, he is so overcome this morning, despite the glorious success he has attained, that he is talking of circumnavigating the globe—an undertaking which would mean his absence from home for three years, if indeed he escaped the dangers of a voyage so prolonged."

"Well," said Brigitte, "it is not such a bad idea; he would return consoled, especially if he discovered two or three or more stars."

"His present discovery satisfies us," replied Phellion, with double his usual solemnity. "It is under the auspices of that triumph which has raised his name so high in the world of science that I have the assurance to say to you point-blank: I come, mademoiselle, to ask you, on behalf of my son, Félix Phellion, who loves and is beloved, for the hand of Mademoiselle Céleste Colleville."

"But, my little father," replied Brigitte, "you are too late; remember that we are *diametrically* engaged to la Peyrade."

"It is never too late to do well, they say; yesterday it would have been too soon to present myself. My son, having no compensation to offer for the disparity in fortune, could not then have said: 'If Céleste by your generosity has a dowry which mine is far from equaling, I have the honor of being a member of the royal order of the Legion of Honor, and shall soon, to all appearance, be a member of the Academy of Sciences, one of the five branches of the Institute.'"

"Certainly," said Brigitte, "Félix is becoming a very pretty match, but our word is passed to la Peyrade; his name has been put up with Céleste's at the mayor's office, and only for an extraordinary accident the contract would have been signed; he is engaged in Thuillier's election, which he has put in good shape; we have capital invested with him in this newspaper business; it would be impossible for us to go back on our promise even if we so desired."

"So," said Phellion, "in one of those rare occasions in which reason and inclination point the same way, you think you must be only guided by the question of interest? Céleste,

we all know, has no inclination for la Peyrade. Brought up with Félix——"

"Brought up with Félix!" interrupted Brigitte, "she was given a certain length of time to choose between Monsieur de la Peyrade and monsieur your son—that's how we coerce her!—and she would have nothing to say to Monsieur Félix, whose atheism is well known."

"You are mistaken, mademoiselle, my son is not an atheist; for Voltaire himself doubted if there could be atheists; and no later than yesterday, in this very house, an ecclesiastic, as celebrated for his talent as for his virtue, after making an eulogistic speech in favor of my son, expressed the desire of becoming known to him."

"*Parbleu!* to convert him," said Brigitte; "but as for this business of the marriage, I am sorry to tell you that the mustard is mixed too late for the dinner; never will Thuillier give up his la Peyrade."

"Mademoiselle," said Phellion, rising, "I feel no humiliation in having taken this useless step; I do not even request you to keep it secret, for I shall be the first to talk of it to all our acquaintances and friends."

"Talk away, my good man, to whomsoever you wish," said Brigitte, bitterly. "Just because your son has discovered a star,—if, indeed, he did really discover it, and not that old man whom the government has decorated,—do you think that he can marry one of the daughters of the King of the French?"

"Enough," said Phellion, "we will say no more; without wishing to depreciate the Thuilliers, I might reply that the Orleans family seems to me a far-fetched illustration. But I do not wish to introduce bitterness into our conversation, and, therefore, begging you to receive the assurance of my humble respects, I will retire."

Having said this, he made a majestic exit, this Parthian arrow leaving Brigitte under the sting of his comparison, in a furious rage, all the more exasperating because the evening before Mme. Thuillier, after the guests had gone, had had

the incredible audacity to say something in favor of Félix. It is needless to say that the helot was brutally snubbed and told to mind her own business. But this attempt at showing a will of her own on the part of her sister-in-law had already put the old maid in a vile humor, and Phellion, speaking on the same subject, had further exasperated her.

Josephine the cook and the "male" domestic received the full force of the after-clap resulting from this scene. Brigitte found that in her absence everything had been wrongly done, so "turning to" herself, at the risk of her neck, she clambered on a chair to reach the topmost shelves of the closet in which she kept her choicest china under lock and key.

This day, which for Brigitte had opened so badly, was to turn out one of the busiest and stormiest of all this story.

As an exact historian we must go back and begin the day at six o'clock in the morning, when we shall see Mme. Thuillier on her way to the Madeleine to hear the mass which the Abbé Gondrin celebrated at that hour, and afterward to approach that holy table, a viaticum which pious souls never fail to fortify themselves with when it is in their minds to accomplish some great resolution.

At eight o'clock we shall see the elder Minard calling upon the young vicar by virtue of his appointment, and confiding his paternal griefs to the able and conciliatory casuist. The Abbé Gondrin gently blamed him for training his son to a profession which, while it seems to lead to a life of hard work and study, really tempts a youth to every folly. Barristers without briefs and doctors without patients, when impecunious, are the recruiting grounds of revolution and mischief; when they are rich, on the other hand, they ape the youthful aristocracy, which, bereft of all its privileges but the *dolce far niente,* devotes the leisure of an idle and useless life to training horses for the course or women for the stage.

In this particular instance the violent proceedings con-

templated by the Mayor of the Eleventh were purely chimerical. There is no longer a Saint-Lazare for the accommodation of wild youth, and Manon Lescauts are no longer kidnapped to America. The abbé suggested that the father should suffer some pecuniary sacrifice; the siren should be paid off and married out of the way; thus would morality triumph in two ways. The young abbé manifested no eagerness to undertake the solution of the matter himself. He was too young for this sort of diplomacy, where scandal might readily accompany the attempt to do good. As the young girl had a mother, the better plan would be for Minard to send for and treat with her.

About mid-day the Abbé Gondrin had a visit from Mme. Thuillier and Céleste. The poor child wanted some further explanation of the words by which the eloquent priest, the previous evening in Brigitte's salon, had vouched for Félix Phellion's salvation. It seemed strange to this young theologian that without being devout a soul could be admitted to mercy by Divine justice, for surely the anathema is explicit: "Out of the church there is no salvation."

"My dear child," said the Abbé Gondrin, "you must learn to better understand those words which seem so inexorable. It is spoken more to the glorification of those who have the happiness to dwell within the pale of our holy mother the church than a malediction on those who are so unfortunate as to be separated from it. God sees the depths of all hearts and knows His elect; and so great is the treasure of His loving-kindness that it has been given to none to limit its generosity and abundance. Who shall dare to say to God, the Omnipotent: 'Thus far Thou shalt be generous and munificent.' Jesus Christ forgave the woman taken in adultery; on the cross He promised paradise to the repentant thief; these show us that his wisdom and mercy, and not man's judgments, shall be supreme. He who thinks himself a Christian may in the eyes of God be but an idolater; another who may be thought to be a pagan may, by his feelings and actions, and unknown to himself, be a Christian. Our holy

religion has this that is divine about it—all generosity, all grandeur, all heroism, are but the practice of its precepts. As I said yesterday to Monsieur de la Peyrade, pure souls must always be won over in the end; we have but to give them time; it is most important to give them due credit, a confidence which returns great dividends; besides all, charity commends it."

"Oh, my God!" cried Céleste, "to see this too late; I who could have chosen between Félix and la Peyrade, and dared not follow the dictates of my heart. Oh! monsieur, could you not speak to my mother? She always listens to your words."

"That is impossible, my child," replied the vicar; "if I had the direction of the conscience of Madame Colleville I might perhaps say a word, but we are too often accused of imprudently intermeddling in family affairs. Believe me, my unauthorized intervention would be more likely to do harm than good. It is for yourself and those who love you," he added, glancing at Mme. Thuillier, "to see if the arrangements already so far advanced could not be changed in the direction of your wishes."

It was written that the poor child was to drink to the dregs the cup of her own intolerance; as the abbé finished speaking, his housekeeper came in to ask if he would receive M. Félix Phellion. Thus, like the charter of 1830, Mme. de Godollo's officious mendacity had become a truth.

"Pass out this way," said the vicar hastily, showing out his two penitents by a private passage.

Life has such strange encounters that it does at times happen that the same measures must be used by a courtesan and a man of God.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said Félix to the young abbé as soon as he met him, "I have heard of the very kind manner in which you spoke of me yesterday in Monsieur Thuillier's salon; I should have hastened to call upon you to express my thanks even if another interest had not brought me hither."

The Abbé Gondrin hastily passed over the compliments,

being anxious to learn in what manner his services might be useful.

"With thoughts which I believe to be charitable," said the young professor, "you were spoken to yesterday about the state of my soul. Those who read it so fluently are able to know far more about my inner being; for during the past few days I have experienced strange, inexplicable feelings. I have never denied God; but face to face with that infinitude in which He has permitted my mind to follow the traces of His work, I seem to have conceived a less vague sense of Him, and one more immediate; this has led me to ask whether an honest, upright life is the only homage His omnipotence expects of me. And yet there are numberless objections which arise in my mind against the worship of which you are a minister, and, while sensible of the beauty of the exterior form, in many of its precepts and practices I find myself disturbed by my reason. I may pay dearly, perhaps the happiness of my whole life, for the indifference and delay which I have shown in seeking the solution of my doubts. I have now decided to search them to the bottom. None better than yourself, Monsieur l'Abbé, can solve my doubts. I submit them to you with confidence. I beg you to listen to me, and to answer me, to tell me by what course of reading—and especially what hours you will be willing to devote to conversations with me—I may pursue my search for the light."

The abbé protested the joy with which, notwithstanding his insufficiency, he would endeavor to reply to the scruples advanced by the young professor. After inviting him to call upon him often, and begging Félix to accept him as his friend, he asked him to read as a first step the "Thoughts" of Pascal. A natural affinity in their talent for geometry might be found to exist between them.

While this scene was passing—to which the importance of the interests in question, and the moral and intellectual elevation of character of the persons concerned, imparted a character of grandeur which like all conditions of calm repose, can be better understood than reproduced—another one of sharp

and bitter discord, that chronic malady of middle-class households, where the pettiness of mind and passion leave an open door by which it enters, was raging in the Thuillier house.

Mounted on her chair, her hair in disarray, her hands and face disfigured by dust and dirt, Brigitte, feather-duster in hand, was cleaning the shelves of the closet in which she was replacing her library of plates, dishes, and sauce-boats, when Flavie came in.

"Brigitte," said she, "when you have finished what you are about you had better come and see us, or else I will send Céleste to you; it seems to me she intends giving us some of her nonsense."

"In what way?" asked Brigitte, going on with her dusting.

"Yes, I think she and Madame Thuillier went this morning to see the Abbé Gondrin, for she has given me a fine setting-to about Félix Phellion, talking of him as if he were a god; you can easily understand that to refuse la Peyrade is but another step."

"Those cursed skull-caps," said Brigitte, "they are all the time meddling in something. I didn't want to invite him, but you would insist."

"But it was only proper."

"What do I care for what is proper?" replied the old maid. "He is a maker of long speeches, who always puts his foot into it. Send Céleste to me. I'll fix her——"

At this instant the servant announced the arrival of the head-clerk of the notary, chosen in default of Dupuis, to draw up the contract. Not giving a thought to her disordered appearance, Brigitte ordered him to be shown in. However, she had the decency to come down from her perch to talk to him.

"Monsieur Thuillier," said the clerk, "came to our office this morning and explained the clauses of the contract he is so good as to intrust to us. But before writing out the stipulations of the marriage, we usually obtain from the mouth of each donor a direct expression of their intentions. Monsieur informed us that he intended giving the bride, at his death,

the reversion of the house he inhabits, which, I presume, is this one."

"Yes," said Brigitte, "these are the conditions. As for me, I give three thousand francs per year in the Three per-cents, capital and interest; but the bride is married under the dotal system."

"That is so," said the clerk, consulting his notes. "Now there is Madame Céleste Thuillier, wife of Louis-Jérôme Thuillier, who gives six thousand in the Three per-cents, with six thousand more at her death."

"That," said Brigitte, "is as safe as if the notary had seen her; however, if it is usual for you to see them, my sister-in-law is here; they will conduct you to her."

And the old maid told the servant to take the clerk to Mme. Thuillier. A moment later the clerk returned, saying there was evidently some misunderstanding, for Mme. Thuillier said she had no intention of making any settlement whatever in favor of the marriage.

"That's too much!" said Brigitte; "come with me, monsieur."

And like a whirlwind she rushed into Mme. Thuillier's chamber. She was pale and trembling.

"What is this you have told monsieur, that you give nothing toward Céleste's dowry?"

"Yes," said the slave, in open rebellion, but in a shaking voice; "my intention is to do nothing."

"Your intentions!" said Brigitte, scarlet with rage; "that's something new."

"Those are my intentions," said the mutineer, quietly.

"At least you will give your reason why?"

"The marriage does not suit me."

"Ah! since when?"

"It is useless for monsieur to listen to our discussion," said Mme. Thuillier, "it will not appear in the contract."

"You do well to be ashamed of yourself," said Brigitte, "for you don't appear in a very favorable light—— Monsieur," said she, turning to the clerk, "it is easier to mark out things in a contract than to add them, eh?"

The clerk nodded in the affirmative.

"Then draw it up as originally told; later, if madame still persists, you can strike it out."

The clerk bowed and left the room. When the two sisters-in-law were alone:

"So you've lost your head, have you?" asked Brigitte. "What whim is this you have taken?"

"It is not a whim; it is a firm resolution."

"For which we have to thank your Abbé Gondrin; you dare not deny that you went with Céleste to see him?" said Brigitte.

"Yes, Céleste and I did call this morning upon our confessor, but I did not open my mouth about what I intended to do."

"So, then, this racket originated in your own empty little head?"

"I told you yesterday that a more suitable marriage could be arranged for Céleste, and I have no intention of despoiling myself in favor of a marriage that I do not approve."

"That *you* approve! Upon my word, we must begin and ask madame's advice."

"I know well enough that I have been a nobody in the house," said Mme. Thuillier. "I resigned myself to the situation long ago. I do, though, care for the happiness of a child, whom I look upon as my own——"

"*Parbleu!*" cried Brigitte, "you were never smart enough to have one; for certainly Thuillier——"

"Sister," said Mme. Thuillier, with dignity, "I took the communion this morning; those are things that I cannot listen to to-day."

"There's just our good sacrament-eaters," cried Brigitte, "acting the holy hypocrite and bringing trouble into the household. And you think it will end here, do you? Thuillier will be here soon; he'll shake you up——"

By calling on the marital authority, Brigitte made confession of her weakness before the unexpected resistance made to her inveterate tyranny. Mme. Thuillier became calmer as

Brigitte waxed more wroth; she could return nothing but insolence.

"A drawl," she shrieked, "a lazy good-for-nothing, incapable of even picking up her handkerchief, and wants to be mistress of the house!"

"I have so little desire to be mistress here that last night I allowed myself to be silenced, after attempting to speak a word; but I am mistress of my own property, and as I believe Céleste will be very unhappy some day, I shall keep it to use as I think best."

"Good dog, there!" said Brigitte, ironically, "*her* property?"

"Mine, yes, that which I had from my father and my mother, which I brought as my dowry to Monsieur Thuillier."

"And who was it then that increased the value of this money, until it brings in twelve thousand francs a year?"

"I have asked account of nothing," replied Mme. Thuillier, gently; "if it had been lost in the uses you made of it you would not have heard a word of complaint from me; as it has prospered it is only fair I should reap the benefit. Besides, I do not reserve it for myself."

"That's how it may happen if you give yourself such airs; it is not so sure that you and I will long pass in and out by the same door."

"You think, perhaps, that Monsieur Thuillier will cast me off? He must have cause, thank God, before he can do that. I have been a wife without reproach."

"Viper! hypocrite! heartless!" cried Brigitte, at the end of her arguments.

"My sister," said Mme. Thuillier, "you are in my apartments."

"Get out, then, dish-rag," yelled the old maid, in a paroxysm of fury. "If I didn't restrain myself——"

And she made a gesture of insulting menace.

Mme. Thuillier rose to leave the room.

"No, you don't," cried Brigitte, forcing her into her seat

again, "and until Thuillier returns and decides what is to be done with you, I shall leave you locked up where you are."

When Brigitte, her face aflame, returned to Mme. Colleville, she found there her brother, whose early return she had predicted. He was radiant.

"My dear," said he to the termagant, not noticing her excited condition, "all goes well; the conspiracy of silence is at an end; two papers, the 'National' and a Carlist journal, have this morning reproduced one of our articles, and there's a weak attack in a ministerial paper."

"All is not going well here, though," replied Brigitte, "and if things continue as they are I shall leave the barracks."

"What has happened to you?" asked Thuillier.

"Your insolent wife, who has just made quite a scene; I and trembling still from it."

"My wife made a scene!" said Thuillier; "then it's the first time in her life."

"Everything has a beginning, and if you don't bring her to order——"

"But what is it all about—this scene?"

"It is because Madame Thuillier does not wish la Peyrade to make her goddaughter; and out of spite at not being able to prevent the marriage, she declares she will give nothing in the contract."

"Come, compose yourself," said Thuillier, coolly; the admission of the "Echo" into the field polemic had made another Pangloss of him: "I'll soon settle all this."

"Yes, Flavie," said Brigitte, after Thuillier had gone to seek his wife, "will you good enough to go home, and tell Mademoiselle Celeste that I do not wish to see her at present, for if she should contradict me I might box her ears. Tell her that I don't like please that she was left at liberty to choose Monsieur Phellion, but she did not see fit to do so; that everything has been arranged with that understanding; and that if she does not wish to see herself reduced to the dowry that you are able to give her, which a bank-messenger could carry in his waistcoat pocket——"

"But, my dear Brigitte," interrupted Flavie, arousing herself under this impertinence, "you may dispense with reminding us so cruelly of our poverty; for after all we have never asked you for anything and we pay our rent punctually, and beside all Monsieur Félix Phellion would gladly take Céleste even if she had no more dowry than a bank-messenger could carry in his *bag*."

And she did not forget to emphasize this word as she pronounced it.

"Oh! so you are going to meddle, too," cried Brigitte; "very well, go and get your Félix. I know very well, my little mother, that this marriage never suited you; it is disagreeable to be nothing more than mother-in-law to your son-in-law."

Flavie had recovered the coolness which had given away for a moment, and without replying to the insinuation simply shrugged her shoulders.

At this moment Thuillier returned; his beatific air was flown.

"My dear Brigitte," said he, "you have a most excellent heart, but at times you give way to violence——"

"Hallo!" cried the old maid; "I am attacked on that side, too."

"Certainly I do not reproach you seriously; and I have just given Céleste a sharp reprimanding; but there are certain proprieties which must be observed."

"What are you babbling to me about proprieties? What are these proprieties which I have disregarded?"

"But, my dear friend, to raise your hand against your sister."

"I lift my hand against that ninny? That's a good one."

"And then," continued Thuillier, "a woman of her age cannot be locked up."

"Have I locked your wife up?"

"You can't deny it, for I found the door double-locked."

"*Parbleu!* that's because in my anger at the infamous things she vomited at me I turned the key without thinking."

"Come, come," said Thuillier; "these are not proper things for people of our class to do."

"So I am in the wrong? Very well, my boy, you will not forget this day. We shall see how your housekeeping will flourish when I cease managing it."

"You will always manage it. Housekeeping is your life. You would be the first to suffer from giving it up."

"Well, we shall see," said Brigitte; "after twenty years of devotion to be treated like the scum of the earth!"

And rushing to the door, which she violently slammed after her, she went away.

Thuillier was not disturbed by this outburst.

"Were you present, Flavie," he said, "when this scene took place?"

"No, it took place in Céleste's chamber. She treated her rudely, then?"

"As I said, she raised her hand to her, and locked her in like a little girl. Céleste may be a somewhat sleepy woman, but there are bounds not to be passed."

"Our good Brigitte is not always agreeable; she and I had a little set-to just now."

"Well," said Thuillier, "this will soon settle itself. I was about to tell you, my dear Flavie, that we had a fine stroke of luck this morning. The 'National' copied two whole paragraphs of an article in which there were truly some of my sentences."

Thuillier was again interrupted in the recital of his good political and literary fortune. "Monsieur," said Joséphine the cook, entering, "can you tell me where I may find the key of the great chest?"

"What for?" asked Thuillier.

"For mademoiselle, who told me to take it to her room."

"What is she going to do with it?"

"Mademoiselle is doubtless going a journey; she is getting her linen out of the drawers, and she is preparing to pack her dresses."

"Another piece of folly now," said Thuillier. "Go and see, Flavie, what she is up to."

"Faith, no," said Madame Colleville, "go yourself. In her exasperated state she is capable of beating me."

"And my stupid wife must take it upon herself to make this rumpus about the contract. She must really have said something taunting to set Brigitte on such a rampage."

"Monsieur does not tell me where the key is," said Joséphine, persistently.

"I know nothing about it," said Thuillier, angrily; "go and tell her it is lost."

"Oh! yes," said Joséphine, "I should like to see myself doing that."

Just then the outer door-bell rang.

"That is doubtless la Peyrade," said Thuillier in a tone of satisfaction. In fact, the Provençal was admitted a moment after.

"Faith, my friend," said Thuillier, "you come just in the nick of time, for the house, all on your account, is turned upside down; it needs your golden tongue to restore it to peace and propriety."

Then he told the barrister the cause of the declaration of this civil war.

Addressing Mme. Colleville:

"Under the circumstances," said Théodose, "I may, I think, without impropriety be allowed a few moments' interview with Mademoiselle Colleville."

Here the Provençal showed his usual acumen: he grasped the idea at once, that the key to the situation was Mademoiselle Céleste—by her means alone could pacification be accomplished.

"I will send for her and leave you alone together," said Flavie.

"My dear Thuillier," said la Peyrade, "you must, without being harsh, let Céleste understand that she must give her consent without further delay, and make her believe that you sent for her for this purpose. After that leave her to me; I will do the rest."

The servant was sent to Madame Colleville's room, in the

entresol, with orders to tell Céleste that her godfather desired to speak with her.

The sort of side-room where, in the midst of Brigitte's household labors, the foregoing scene had been enacted, was not a fitting place for the interview asked by la Peyrade. They went, therefore, into the salon, to await Céleste's coming. As soon as she appeared, in order to carry out the program agreed upon, Thuillier said to her:

"My child, your mother has told us things that have astonished me; can it really be true that, with the contract all but signed yesterday, you have not yet decided to accept the marriage arranged for you?"

"My godfather," replied Céleste, rather surprised at the abrupt interrogation, "it does not seem to me that I said this to my mamma."

"Did you not just now speak of Monsieur Félix Phellion in terms of extravagant praise?"

"I spoke of Monsieur Phellion as every one else is speaking of him."

"Come, now," said Thuillier, authoritatively, "let us have no more equivocation; do you—yes or no—refuse to marry Monsieur de la Peyrade?"

"My good friend," said the Provençal, intervening, "your way of putting the case is too crude and rough, and, with me present, it seems altogether out of place. As I am the one chiefly interested, will you permit me to have an explanation with Mademoiselle Céleste,—an explanation which in fact may become necessary? Madame Colleville will not refuse this favor. In my position there can be nothing in my request to alarm her maternal prudence."

"I would willingly grant your request," replied Flavie, "if I was not afraid that all these performances did not have an air of putting in doubt what has been irrevocably decided upon."

"On the contrary, my dear madame, I have the strongest desire that up to the last moment Mademoiselle Céleste may retain full possession of her liberty. Will you then, as we say in court, grant my petition?"

"So be it," said Mme. Colleville; "you account yourself very smart, but if you let that child get the better of you, so much the worse for yourself. Come, Thuillier, it seems we are in the way here."

As soon as the two designed for each other were left alone:

"Mademoiselle," said la Peyrade, placing a chair for Céleste and taking one himself, "you will admit, I think, that I have not pestered you with my attentions. I have known both the impulse of your heart and the repugnance of your conscience; I hoped that after a time I should have made an agreeable refuge for those two currents of sentiments, but we have now reached a point where I think it is not impertinent or indiscreet to beg you to let me know upon what course you have decided."

"*Mon Dieu!* monsieur," said Céleste, "as you speak so frankly and kindly to me, I will tell you, what you already know, that, brought up as I was with Monsieur Félix Phellion, knowing him longer by far than I have known you, the idea of marriage, always so alarming to a young girl, was less terrifying in regard to him than it would be to others."

"At one time," remarked Théodose, "you were allowed a choice——"

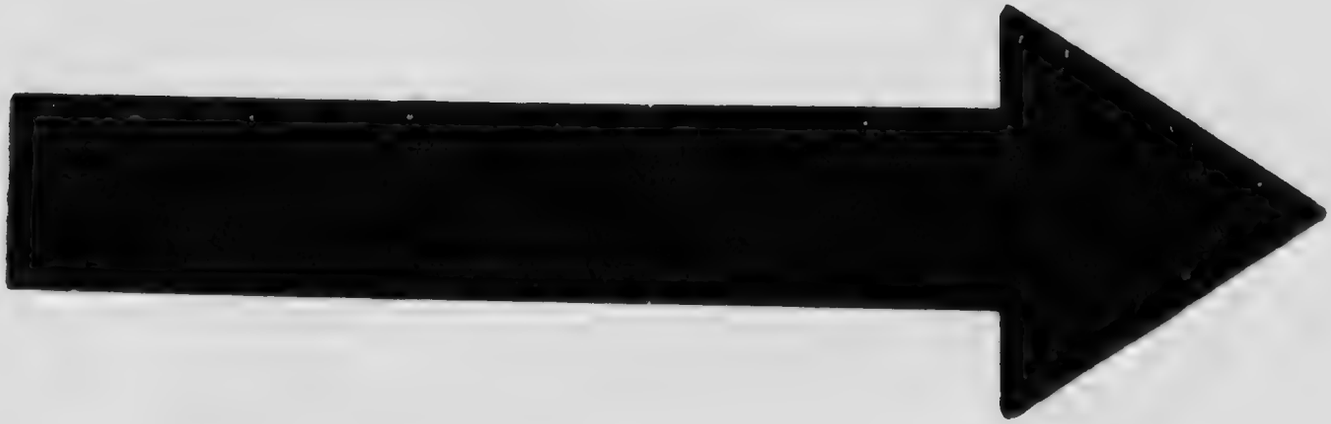
"True, but at that time religious difficulties beset the way."

"And to-day those difficulties have disappeared?"

"Nearly," answered Céleste. "I am in the habit of subordinating my opinion to that of others who are wiser than myself, monsieur, and yesterday you heard the manner in which the Abbé Gondrin spoke of Monsieur Phellion. And this morning he went to see him."

"Oh!" said la Peyrade, with a touch of irony, "it seems he must certainly have seen Father Anselme, then? But, admitting that he has become all you wish on the religious side, have you reflected on the great event which has just taken place in his life?"

"Most certainly, but that is no reason for thinking less of him."



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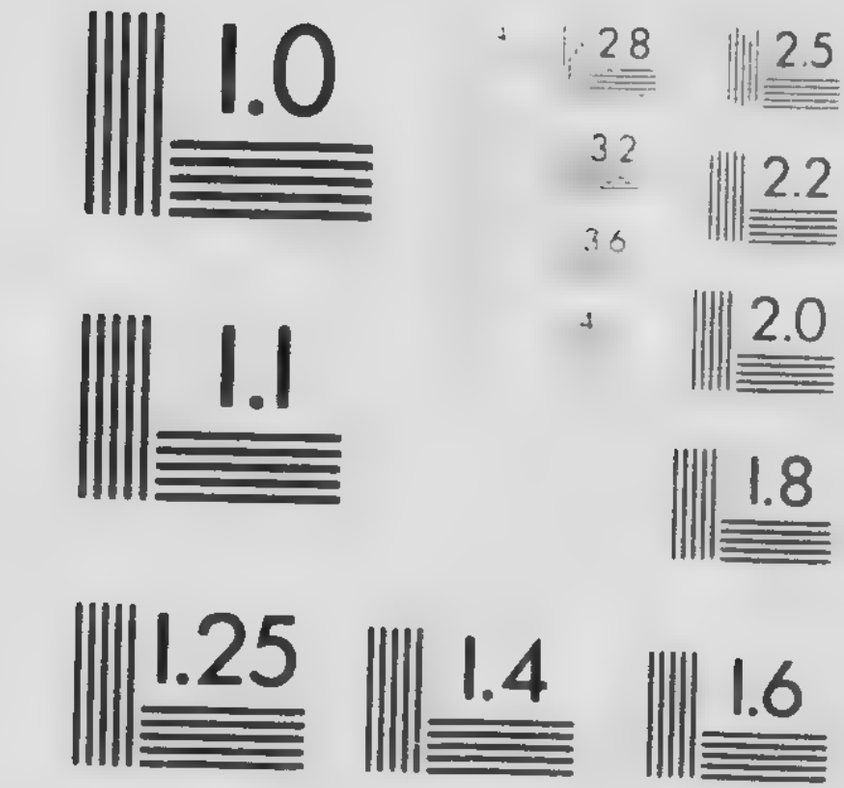

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"No, but it is a reason why he should think more of himself. For that modesty and humility which were the greatest charms of his character, I am afraid will be replaced by a self-confidence and a self-esteem which, while it may develop his individuality, may also in time change him, and dry up the springs of affection. He has discovered one world, mademoiselle; may he not strive to discover two? Your rival will be the whole firmament."

"You plead your cause most intelligently," said Céleste, smiling, "so that I can fancy you the barrister fully as troublesome as a husband as would be Monsieur Phellion the astronomer."

"Mademoiselle," said la Peyrade, "let us speak seriously. I believe in your goodness of heart, and I am confident of your extreme delicacy. But do you know what is happening to Monsieur Félix Phellion? He has not lost anything by his devotion to his old master; his pious fraud is known to all, the discovery has been acknowledged as his, and if I can believe Monsieur Minard, whom I met a moment ago, he is to be made chevalier of the Legion of Honor and a member of the Academy of Sciences. Now, if I were a woman, I own that I should be distressed if, at the very time I had decided to take a man into favor, such an avalanche of good things should suddenly fall upon him; I should dread lest the world should say I adored the rising sun."

"Oh! monsieur," said Céleste, quickly, "you cannot believe me capable of such baseness."

"I, no," said the Provençal; "I should affirm precisely the contrary; but the world is rash and unjust and perverse in its judgments."

He saw that he had caused inquietude and a sense of dismay in the young girl, who made no reply.

"Now," continued la Peyrade, "to speak of a more serious aspect of your situation, one which is not merely personal, a question, one may say, between you and yourself: are you aware that at this moment you are unconsciously the cause in this very house of terrible and most regrettable scenes?"

"I, monsieur?" said Céleste, with surprise not unmingled with dread.

"Yes; concerning your godmother; by the extreme affection that she bears you she seems to have become an entirely different woman; for the first time in her life she thinks for herself. With that energy of will which may be readily explained when one remembers that she has long repressed it, she declares that she will not make her proposed liberal gift to you; I need not inform you, of course, whom the person is that this unlooked-for rigor is directed against."

"But, monsieur, I assure you that this idea of my godmother's was quite unknown to me."

"I know that," said la Peyrade; "and it would be a matter of minor importance but for the fact that Brigitte has taken as an insult to herself this attitude of her sister-in-law, whom she had always found pliant and obedient to her control. Painful, even stormy explanations, have taken place. Thuillier, between the hammer and the anvil, could do nothing; indeed, he further embittered matters, till they have reached a point where, at this moment, if without running the risk of exciting a terrible access of anger, you should visit mademoiselle's chamber, you would find her engaged in packing up to leave the house."

"Monsieur! what is this you are saying?" exclaimed Céleste, horrified.

"The truth," said la Peyrade; "and the domestics will confirm it, for, indeed, I feel that my revelations are scarcely credible."

"But it is impossible," replied the poor child, whose agitation increased with every word uttered by the adroit Provençal. "I cannot be the cause of such great unhappiness."

"You mean you did not intend to be, but the harm is done; I pray heaven it may not be irremediable."

"But, my God, what can I do?" said Céleste, wringing her hands.

"I should reply, unhesitatingly, sacrifice yourself, if it were not in the present circumstances I should have to play the at once sad and enviable part of sacrificer."

"Monsieur," said Céleste, "you do not interpret aright the resistance I have been able to make, and which was barely expressed. I have certainly had a preference, but I never considered myself a victim; whatever may be necessary to restore peace to this house I will most willingly do."

"On my own account," said la Peyrade, with hypocritical humility, "that would be more than I dare ask for; but for all our sakes I must say that something further is needed. Madame Thuillier has not laid aside her old weakness and submission to take it up again immediately, merely upon the assurance of your submission. Coming from my mouth this may seem very ridiculous, but the situation demands it; and your godmother must believe you to be entirely devoid of good taste in eagerly accepting my suit,—a thing very improbable, but which may be sufficiently well acted to deceive her."

"So be it," said Céleste. "I shall know how to seem smiling and happy. My godmother, monsieur, has been to me a mother; and for such a mother what would I not undergo?"

The position was so pathetic, and Céleste had so artlessly betrayed the depth of her feelings and, at the same time, her determination to make the sacrifice, that, if la Peyrade had possessed any heart at all, he must have loathed his part; but to him Céleste was but a stepping-stone, and, provided the ladder can hold and raise you, who would care whether it did so with enthusiasm or not? Therefore it was decided that Céleste should go to her godmother and prove to her that it was all a mistake to suppose she had expressed objection to la Peyrade. Madame Thuillier's opposition neutralized, all would become easy. Then la Peyrade was to take upon himself the task of making peace between the two sisters-in-law; and it may be supposed that he was not wanting in words to promise the innocent girl a life in the future, when, by his unfailing respect, affection, and devotion, he would spare her every regret for the moral necessity under which she had accepted him.

When Céleste went to her godmother she found it but a

slight task to convince her. The tension of will necessary for her late rebellion was almost superhuman, for she was acting against her every instinct. At the moment when she received the false confidence of her godchild, the reaction was beginning, and she would doubtless have failed in the strength necessary to continue in the new path on which she had started. She was thus an easy dupe to the comedy played for la Peyrade's benefit in Céleste's tender heart. The tempest calmed on this side, la Peyrade had no difficulty in showing Brigitte that she had gone rather too far in her attempt at suppressing the revolt against her authority. That authority being no longer disputed, Brigitte was no longer incensed against her sister-in-law, whom she had been on the point of slapping; so the quarrel was settled with a few pleasant words and a kiss, poor Céleste paying the war indemnity.

After dinner, which was only a family meal, the notary whom they were to visit the next day, for it was impossible to have a second edition of the abortive evening party, called upon Mademoiselle Thuillier, and submitted to the parties interested a copy of the contract before having it engrossed. This attention was not surprising in a man just entering into business relations with so important a person as a municipal councilor, whom it was to his interest to capture as a regular client. La Peyrade was too shrewd to object to any of the clauses in the contract as it was read. A few of Brigitte's changes gave the new notary a high opinion of the business capacity of the old maid, and showed la Peyrade that more precautions were inserted against him than were altogether in good taste; but he raised no difficulties; he knew the meshes of no contract could be so closely drawn that a determined and smart man could not in some way edge through them. The appointment was made for the contract to be signed at two o'clock next day, at the notary's office.

During the rest of the evening, taking advantage of Céleste's promise to seem smiling and happy, la Peyrade played, as it were, with the poor child, forcing her to respond to him in a manner far from the real feeling of her heart, now wholly

filled by Félix. Flavie, seeing the Provençal putting forth all his fascinations, remembered how, not so long ago, he had used the same seductive manner to entangle her. "The monster!" she said in a hissing mutter; but she was forced to mask the torture beneath a smiling face, and a moment later the announcement of a great service rendered by la Peyrade to the Thuilliers was to put the final touch upon his influence and credit.

Minard was announced.

"My dear friends," said he, as he came in, "I have come to make a little revelation to you which will cause much surprise. It will, I think, be a lesson to all of us when the question of receiving foreigners in our houses comes up."

"How is that?" said Brigitte, inquisitively.

"That Hungarian woman with whom you were so delighted, that Madame Torna, Comtesse de Godollo——"

"Well?" said the old maid.

"Well," Minard went on, "she is no better than she should be; for two months you petted in your house one of the most impudent of kept women."

"Who told you that story?" said Brigitte, not willing to admit that she had been made a dupe of.

"It is no story," replied the mayor; "I know the facts myself *de visu.*"

"Humph! then you associate with kept women, eh?" said Brigitte, assuming the offensive. "A nice state of affairs, and suppose Zélie knew?"

"It is not he," said Thuillier, knowingly, "who keeps such company, but monsieur his son; we have heard about it."

"Well, yes," said Minard, quite provoked at the manner in which his communication had been received; "and since that rascal has had the impudence to introduce his trumpery actress to you so that she might be written up in your journal, I hide nothing from you. Monsieur Julian has taken upon himself to support an actress from a petty theatre, and it was in her company that I met *your friend,* Madame de Godollo. It seems to me I speak plainly enough, and my word is not to be doubted."

"Perhaps it may be plain enough to you," replied Brigitte, "but unless you are one of those worthy men, fathers to whom their sons introduce their mistresses, I should like to know how you, you, found yourself in company of Monsieur Julian's 'blonde'?"

"Ah!" said Minard, in a fury; "do you suppose that I am the man to lend a hand to my son's profligacy?"

"I suppose nothing," retorted Brigitte; "you said: 'I found myself in her company——'"

"I said nothing of the kind," interrupted Minard; "I did say that I had seen Madame de Godollo, whose real name is Komorn, and is no more a countess than you or Madame Colleville are, in the company of an unworthy creature with whom my son wastes his money and time. Now, perhaps you would like me to explain the how and why of the meeting."

"Why, yes," said Brigitte, incredulously; "the explanation does not seem unnecessary."

"Very well. To show the manner in which I shut my eyes to my son's misconduct, when I was warned by an anonymous letter telling of his debaucheries, I took steps to have the evidence of my own eyes; for I know how far in general an anonymous letter is to be relied on."

"By-the-by," said Brigitte, in a parenthesis, and turning to la Peyrade, "it's funny we have had none about you, Monsieur Advocate."

"If you don't care to listen," said Minard, nettled at being interrupted, "it is useless to ask for particulars."

"That's so," replied Brigitte, "we are listening. You wished to see with your own eyes——"

"Yes," said Minard, "and on the day of your dinner, when I came in so late, I had been to the Folies-Dramatiques, the scene of Julian's dissipations, where his creature was to make her début. I wanted to see if that young scoundrel, who, pretending to be sick, had left the house immediately after our departure, was at his post as *claquer;* it is cruel, in fact, to admit how these imbeciles who become infatuated with actresses go down hill."

"Was he there?" said Brigitte, showing little sympathy for the woes of Monsieur the Mayor.

"No, mademoiselle, he was not there. I did not see him among the audience; but at a movement on the stage as soon as the curtain was raised, looking in that direction, I saw that child, the shame of my old age, talking familiarly with a fireman; he was so far forward as to interrupt the view of some one in the theatre, who shouted: 'Turn out that cocoa-nut.' Judge how my paternal heart must have rejoiced on hearing this agreeable admonition."

"It is because you have spoiled your dear Julian."

"So far from having spoiled him," replied Minard, "had it not been for his mother's entreaties, I should have taken the severest measures against him; but having listened to the Abbé Gondrin's sensible and tolerant remarks last night, I concluded to ask his advice, after which I decided upon this ——"

"Do priests understand these things?" said Brigitte, in great disdain.

"The proof that they understand them is that the plan recommended by Monsieur the Vicaire succeeded perfectly. Finding the mother of this dangerous girl, I told her that I would make a sacrifice to put an end to this scandal, which no doubt disturbed her as much as it did me; that I would pay an income of fifteen hundred livres or thirty thousand francs down as a dowry for her daughter; and I added that as far as my son was concerned, she had nothing to expect, as I intended to cut off his allowance. She said a good round sum was just the thing, as there was a copying clerk in the twelfth arrondissement who had his eye on Olympe, and would take her at once."

"Did she mention this copying clerk's name," asked la Peyrade.

"I think not," said Minard; "at any rate, if she did I have forgotten it; I settled everything in a moment with the mother, who seems to me a pretty good sort of woman."

"But in all this I see no Madame de Godollo," said Brigitte.

'Don't be impatient," said Minard. "'The only thing I fear,' said the mother of the actress, 'is the bad advice which may be given by a Polish woman, one named Madame *Cramone,* who has my girl by the hair and does as she likes with; perhaps if you saw her and hinted at some [illegible] perquisite for herself, she might help to play our game. Shall I call her? I won't name no names, I'll just tell her: "Here's a gentleman as wants to see you."' I agreed to this arrangement. The lady was brought in; you can imagine how astounded I was when I found myself face to face with your Madame Godollo, who ran off, laughing, as soon as she saw me."

"And you are sure it was she?" asked Brigitte. "If you only saw her——"

The wily Provençal was not the man to let such an occasion as this slip for retaliating on the Hungarian for her trickery.

"Monsieur le Maire is not mistaken," said he with authority.

"Oh, so you know her too," said Mademoiselle Thuillier, "and you allowed vermin like this to consort with us?"

"On the contrary," said la Peyrade, "it was I who without any fuss or scandal, and without informing any person, rid your house of her company. You remember how suddenly the woman went away; it was I, who, having discovered what she was, gave her two days in which to clear out, threatening unless she did so to discover the whole truth to you."

"My dear fellow," said Thuillier, seizing the hand of the barrister, "you acted with great prudence and determination. This is but another obligation you have placed us under."

"You see, mademoiselle," said la Peyrade, addressing Céleste, "the strange protectress a friend of yours had."

"Thank God!" replied Madame Thuillier, "Félix Phellion is above all such vile things."

"Oh! there, Papa Minard," said Brigitte, "we'll all keep mum as to this. Our mouths shall be kept locked about Monsieur Julian's escapades. You will take a cup of tea?"

"Willingly," replied Minard.

"Céleste," said the old maid, "ring for Henri and have him put the large kettle on the fire."

Although they were not to go to the notary's until afternoon, the next morning before eight o'clock Brigitte began what her brother called her *ravaud* (rampage), a popular expression, which denotes that turbulent, bickering, morning restlessness which La Fontaine had so well depicted in his fable of "The Old Woman and Her Two Servants."

Brigitte declared that if they didn't begin early they would never be ready. She prevented Thuillier going to the office; she worried Joséphine the cook about hurrying on the breakfast, and, notwithstanding the results of the previous day, with difficulty restrained herself from nagging at Madame Thuillier, who did not enter so heartily as she wished into the spirit of her favorite maxim, "Better be too soon than too late." Then she went in to the Collevilles' and made the same disturbance; she put her veto on a dress of Flavie's, which she considered too elegant, and indicated to Céleste the hat and dress in which she wished her to appear; Colleville, who could not be detained from his office, must go in his dress suit, and had to set his watch by hers, warning him that if he were late they would not wait for him.

It was very amusing that Brigitte, after driving everybody with "sword in hand," came near being late herself. Under pretext of aiding everybody, besides attending to her ordinary occupations, which she would not have neglected for the world, she had her eye and hand upon so many things that she ended by being overcome. However, the delay was attributed to a hairdresser who had been engaged for the occasion to part her hair straight.

The "artist" had arranged it according to the fashion. He was obliged to do his work all over, in order to dress it in his customer's usual style, which was no style at all, and always looked like a cat who had been through a hedge.

At half-past one la Peyrade, Thuillier, Colleville, Mme. Thuillier, and Celesté were assembled in the salon. Flavie joined them soon after, fastening her bracelets as she came to disarm any squabbling; she was relieved to find that she was ready before Brigitte. As for the latter, furious at finding

herself late, she found another cause for vexation. The event seemed to require the wearing of a corset, a refinement in which she seldom indulged. Now, the unhappy maid, who was at that time engaged in lacing her, tried to discover just how tight she wanted them drawn; she alone knew the storms and terrors of a corset-day.

"I would rather," said the girl, "lace the obelisk: I believe it would turn out a better shape; I know, at any rate, it couldn't use its mouth so much."

While those in the salon were laughing and talking, under their breaths, at the flagrant breach of punctuality in which Queen Elizabeth was caught, the porter came in and gave a sealed package to Thuillier, addressed to "Monsieur Thuillier, proprietor of the 'Écho de la Bièvre'—Urgent."

Opening the envelope, he found it contained a copy of a ministerial paper which had hitherto shown itself discourteous and hostile, refusing to "exchange," a thing usually made willingly between all newspapers.

Puzzled at this being sent to his house instead of the office of the "Écho," he hastily unfolded the sheet and read with an emotion that may be imagined the following article, recommended to his especial notice by a circle in red ink:

An obscure organ was about expiring in its darkness, when a person of recent ambition bethought himself of galvanizing it. His object was to make it a stepping-stone to climb from his municipal functions to the envied one of a deputy. By good fortune this intrigue has floated to the surface. The electors will certainly not be caught by such a cunning manner of advancing one's own interests; when the proper time arrives, if ridicule has not already done justice by routing this absurd candidate, we shall ourselves prove to the nincompoop that for a man to attain to the honor of representing the country, something more is required than having the money with which to buy a paper and to hire a whitewasher to put the horrid jargon of his articles and pamphlets into decent French. We confine ourselves to-day to this brief notice, but our readers may rely on us keeping them fully posted as to the progress of this electoral farce, if the proprietors have the melancholy courage to go on with it.

Thuillier twice read this declaration of war, which left him anything but calm and impassive; then, taking la Peyrade aside:

"See this," said he; "it looks serious."

"Well?" said la Peyrade.

"How—well?" asked Thuillier.

"Yes, what is there particularly serious in this?"

"What is there that is serious? Why, the article is injurious to me."

"You cannot doubt," said la Peyrade, "that some virtuous Cérizet is doing it in a spirit of revenge by throwing this fire-cracker between your legs."

"Cérizet or anybody else who wrote this diatribe is an insolent fellow," said Thuillier, getting excited, "and the matter shall not rest here."

"As for me," said la Peyrade, "I should make no rejoinder. You are not named, though the attack is aimed at you; we should let the enemy more openly declare himself, then when we discover him—rap his knuckles."

"Not at all," said Thuillier; "it is impossible that I should rest under such an insult."

"The devil!" said the barrister; "what a thin skin you have. You must bear in mind, my dear boy, that you are a journalist, and a candidate; you must harden yourself to the like of this."

"I, my friend; I make it a principle to allow no one to tread on my toes. They announce, besides, that they will keep it up. So I am going to cut short these impertinences."

"Well," said la Peyrade, "in journalism, as in politics, a hot temper has its benefits; it makes a man respected; it stops attacks——"

"*Certainly,*" said Thuillier, "*principiis obsta.* Not to-day, for we haven't the time, but to-morrow I shall lay this article before the court."

"The court!" exclaimed the Provençal; "go to law about such a matter as this? But there is no case; neither you nor the paper and named; besides, a lawsuit is a pitiable business;

you'll look like a boy who has been fightin[illegible] [illegible]et licked running to complain to his mammy or his schoolmaster. Now, if you said that you would allow Fleury to be put into the question, I could understand it, though even then it would be difficult to see in this entirely personal matter an attack against the journal which the manager should take up."

"Pshaw!" said Thuillier, "do you imagine, for example, that I am going to commit myself with a Cérizet or any other emissary of the authorities? I pique myself, my dear, on possessing civic courage which does not give in to prejudice; and which, instead of taking the law into his own hands, has recourse to that means of defence provided by law. Besides, the new law against dueling may be enforced; I have no desire to go into exile or spend one or two years in prison."

"We can discuss all this later," said la Peyrade; "here is your sister; she would think all was lost if it reached her ears."

Seeing Brigitte come in, Colleville shouted: "Standing room only,' and sang the refrain of "la Parisienne."

"*Dieu!* Colleville, how coarse you are," said the tardy one, hastening to throw a stone into the other's garden before one could be thrown into hers.

"Well, are we all ready?" she added, arranging her cloak before a glass. "What time is it? It won't do to be there before time like provincials."

"One fifty," said Colleville; "I go by the Tuileries."

"We are just right, then," said Brigitte; "it will take about that much time to get to the Rue Caumartin. Joséphine," she cried, going to the door of the drawing-room, "we dine at six; therefore, be sure to put the turkey to roast at the right time, and don't let it burn, like the last one. Gracious! what's that?" and with a hasty movement she closed the door she had been holding open. "What a nuisance! I hope Henri will have sense enough to say we are all out."

Not at all: Henri came in to say that an aged gentleman, wearing decorations, very genteel, had asked to be received on urgent business.

"Why didn't you say we were out?"

"I should have done so, if mademoiselle had not opened the door of the salon so that the gentleman could see all the family assembled."

"Of course," said Brigitte; "you're never in the wrong."

"What answer shall I make him?" asked the servant.

"Say," replied Thuillier, "that we are exceedingly sorry that we are unable to receive monsieur, but that we are expected at the notary's to sign a marriage-contract, and that if he will return in two hours——"

"I have already told him all that," said Henri, "but he says the matter relates to the contract, and that his visit is more important to yourself than to him."

"Well, go and receive him, and send him off double-quick," said Brigitte. "That will take less time than all the explanations of Monsieur Henri, who is an orator."

If la Peyrade had been consulted he would not have dismissed the subject so curtly; for he had already had more than one sample of the spokes that some occult influence was endeavoring to fix in the wheels of his marriage, and this visit had a bad look to him.

"Then show him into my study," said Thuillier, taking his sister's advice; and, opening a door from the salon, he went in first to receive his guest.

Instantly Brigitte's eye was at the keyhole:

"What am imbecile that Thuillier is; he has given him a seat at the farther end of the room so it is impossible that I can hear what they are saying."

La Peyrade covered an inward agitation by an outward air of indifference; he even approached the three ladies and greeted Céleste most graciously, who responded with the smiling, happy satisfaction that her rôle demanded. As for Colleville, he was killing time by composing an anagram on these six words: *le journal l' "Écho de la Bièvre,"* and had arrived at the following combination of letters, little reassuring to the future of that paper: *O d'Écho, jarni! la bévue rèel*—; but a final E was lacking to complete—O but the Écho's a blunder: this, of course, was an imperfect finish.

"He takes a lot of snuff," said the peeping Brigitte, her eye glued to the keyhole; "his gold snuff-box is larger than Minard's; I never saw one so large; perhaps, though," said she, as a running comment, "it's only silver-gilt. He's doing the talking and Thuillier sits listening like a dunderhead. Pretty soon I shall go in and tell them they can't keep ladies waiting like this."

Just as she had put her hand on the lock she heard Thuillier raise his voice, and that made her take another squint through the keyhole.

"He's standing up; he's evidently going away," said she, with satisfaction.

A moment later she saw she was mistaken, for the little old man had only left his chair to amble up and down the room to continue the conversation with greater freedom.

"By my faith! I'm going in," said she, "to tell Thuillier we are going without him; he can follow us when he gets through."

So saying the old maid gave two imperious sharp raps on the door, and then resolutely entered the study.

In his turn la Peyrade had the poor taste, excusable, however, by reason of his intense curiosity, to observe through the keyhole what was going on. At first he thought he recognized the "commander" who had waited upon Mme. de Godollo. Then he saw Thuillier addressing his sister with gestures of authority very unlike his usual style of deference and submission.

"Thuillier finds some interest in that creature's talk," said Brigitte, reëntering the salon. "He told us to wait until he is through, ordering me very bluntly to leave them, although the little gentleman told me very politely that they were about through. 'But be sure to wait for me,' added Jérôme. Really it seems to me that since he has begun to make newspapers I don't know him; one would think he led the world with a wand."

"I am afraid he is being entangled by some adventurer," said la Peyrade "That old man I think I saw with Madame

Komorn on the day I told her to clear out; he must belong to the same crowd."

"Why, you ought to have told me this!" said Brigitte; "I should mighty soon have asked after the Countess, and let him know what we think of his Hungarian."

At this moment they heard the moving of chairs. Brigitte ran to the keyhole.

"Yes," said she, "he is going away. Jérôme is showing him out, with great deference."

As Thuillier still delayed his appearance, Colleville had time to go to the window; and upon seeing the little old man get into an elegant coupé,—one with which the reader is already familiar,—he cried out, "What a gorgeous livery! At any rate he is an adventurer of high rank."

Finally Thuillier entered the room, his face clouded with care, his manner exceedingly grave.

"My dear la Peyrade," said he, "you did not inform me that another proposal of marriage had been seriously considered by you?"

"Indeed I did; I told you that I had been offered a very wealthy heiress, but that my heart was here; I did not choose to go further into the matter, and so nothing came of it."

"Well, I think you did wrong in treating this proposal lightly."

"What! do you in the presence of these ladies, reproach me with being faithful to my first desires, and to our old engagements?"

"My friend, the conversation I have just had has been most instructive to me; when you know what I know, with many other things personal to yourself, of which I shall inform you privately, I believe you will agree with me. One thing is positive, we shall not go to the notrry's to-day. Were I in your place I should at once go and see Monsieur du Portail."

"Again that name! it pursues me like remorse," cried la Peyrade.

"Yes, go there at once; he awaits you. That is an indispensable preliminary before we proceed further. When you

shall have seen this honest gentleman—well, if you persist in demanding Céleste's hand, we may carry out our plans; until then we shall take no further steps."

"But, my poor boy," said Brigitte to Thuillier, "you have been bamboozled by a rascal; this man belong to the Godollo clique."

"Madame de Godollo," replied Thuillier, "is not at all what you suppose her to be; the best thing this house can do is never to say anything about her, good or evil. As to la Peyrade, as this is not the first invitation he has received, I cannot for the life of me see why he hesitates to go and see Monsieur du Portail."

"Well now, has that little old man completely bewitched you," said Brigitte.

"I tell you this, that that old man is all that his exterior shows. He has seven crosses, a handsome equipage, and he has told me things that have absolutely astounded me."

"Well, perhaps he's a fortune-teller, like Madame Fontaine, who upset me once when, thinking to have a good laugh at the old witch, I visited her in company with Madame Minard."

"Well, if he is not a magician, he has a very long arm," said Thuillier, "and no good can come from neglecting his advice. Why, he only caught one glance at you, Brigitte, and he said you were a master-woman and born to command."

"The fact is," replied Brigitte, smacking her lips at this compliment like a cat lapping cream, "this little old man has a well-bred air. Listen to me, my dear boy," added she, turning to and addressing la Peyrade, "when such a bigwig insists upon it, why, go and see this du Portail. I don't see that it would commit you to anything."

"Most certainly," said Colleville; "were I but you I would pay thirty calls on du Portail, or all the Port*als** on earth, if I should only be asked."

The scene was beginning to be very like that in the "Bar-

* A pun impossible to translate.

bier de Séville," when everybody tells Basil to go to bed, till he feels in quite a fever. La Peyrade took up his hat in a huff and went whither his destiny called him: *Quo sua fata vocobant.*

On arriving at the Rue Honoré-Chevalier, la Peyrade felt a doubt; the dilapidated appearance of the house where he was to call made him think he had mistaken the number. How could a person of M. du Portail's importance who intervened so cruelly in his life live in such a place! He hesitated to introduce himself to Sieur Perrache, the porter. But when he reached the ante-chamber of the apartment indicated to him, the deportment of Bruno, the old valet, the appearance of the furniture and the other appurtenances, led him to think he had come to the right place. Introduced into the study of the old gentleman as soon as he was announced, his surprise was great when he found himself in the presence of the pretended commander, the friend of Madame de Godollo, or, if one prefers, in the presence of the little old man that he had seen a few moments before at Thuillier's.

"At last," said du Portail, rising and drawing forward a chair, "we meet, my recalcitrant gentleman; your ear has taken some pulling, though."

"May I know, monsieur," said la Peyrade, haughtily, and not taking the seat offered him, "what interest you can possibly have in meddling in my affairs? I do not know you, but I may add that the place in which I once happened to see you did not create an absolutely unconquerable desire to make your acquaintance."

"Where did you see me?" asked du Portail.

"In the lodging of a kind of street-walker, who went by the name of Madame la Comtesse de Godollo."

"Where monsieur himself was presumably calling, with a less disinterested reason than my own," said the little old man.

"I am not here," said Théodose, "to bandy wit. I have the right, monsieur, to demand an explanation of your proceedings in reference to myself. Do not, I beg you, delay

them with a facetiousness that I shall be far from appreciating."

"Then, my dear fellow," said du Portail, "do sit down; I am not in the humor to dislocate my neck by talking to such a great height as you are at."

This was a reasonable intimation, and was given in such a manner as to convey the fact that lordly airs would not alarm the old gentleman. La Peyrade, as offensively as might be, therefore deferred to his host's wishes.

"Monsieur Cérizet," said du Portail, "a man of exceedingly high position in the world, and who has the honor to be one of your friends——"

"I no longer see the man," said la Peyrade, tartly, understanding the old man's malicious insinuation.

"But the time has been," replied du Portail, "when you did occasionally see him, as, for example, when you paid for his dinner at the Rocher de Cancale—I was about to say that I requested the virtuous Monsieur Cérizet to sound you as to a marriage——"

"Which I refused," interrupted Théodose, "and which I still refuse, more decidedly than ever."

"Precisely," replied the gentleman, "that is the question; it is to talk of that business that I have waited so long a time to meet you. I think, too, that you will accept it."

"But this crazy girl that you are flinging at my head," said la Peyrade, "who is she? She is not your daughter, nor a relative, I suppose, for in such a case you would show more decency in chasing for a husband for her."

"This girl," said du Portail, "is the daughter of one of my friends; she lost her father some ten years ago, since which time she has been living with me; I have given her every care demanded by her sad condition. Her fortune, to which I have greatly added, in addition to my own which I intend leaving her, will make her a very wealthy heiress. I know that you have no aversion to handsome dowries, for you have sought for them in even the lowest ranks, in the Thuilliers' house, for instance; or, to use your own words, in that of a

street-walker whom you hardly knew; I could therefore figure on your being willing to accept at my hands a very rich young woman, especially as her infirmity is pronounced curable by the best physicians; whereas you can never cure Monsieur and Mademoiselle Thuillier—the one of being a fool, the other of being a termagant—any more than you could cure Madame Komorn of being extremely giddy and of an easy virtue."

"It might suit my convenience," replied la Peyrade, "to marry the goddaughter of a fool and a termagant if I choose her myself, or I might become the husband of a coquette, if the passion so seized me; but the Queen of Sheba, if imposed upon me, neither you, monsieur, I assure you, nor the most able or powerful man living, could force me to accept."

"So for that very reason I address myself to your good sense and intelligence; but in order to speak to people we have to come face to face with them. Reflect for a moment on your position. Don't get angry if, like a surgeon who wishes to save his patient, I place my hands mercilessly on the wounds of a life up to now so laborious and tempest-tossed. The first point to make is that the Céleste Colleville affair is ended for you."

"Why so?" asked la Peyrade.

"Because I have just seen Thuillier and terrified him with a picture of all the disasters he has already incurred, and those he will further incur if he persists in the thought of giving you his goddaughter in marriage. He knows that it was I who annulled Madame du Bruel's kindness in the matter of the Cross; that it was I who had his pamphlet seized; that I sent into his house that Hungarian who tricked you all so neatly; that it has been my care to see that the ministerial journals have commenced a fire which will grow fiercer with each succeeding day—not to mention other machinery which will be set in motion to oppose his candidacy. So you see, my dear sir, not only will you lose the credit of being the chief agent in his election, but you are actually the stumbling-block to Thuillier's ambition. This is enough to prove to you

that the ramparts by which you imposed yourself upon that family, who never really like you, are now breached and dismantled."

"But you that flatter yourself that you have done all this," said la Peyrade, "who are you?"

"I won't reply that you are very inquisitive, for I intend later to answer your question; but with your permission, for the present at least, we will continue your life's autopsy—now a dead life, but to which I propose to give a glorious resurrection. You are twenty-eight; you have barely started on the career in which I forbid you taking another step. Some few days hence the Barristers' Association will meet and will censure you, more or less severely, for the manner in which you placed that property in the Thuilliers' possession. Have no illusions. Censure—I mention only your least peril—for a lawyer is not like that for a hack-driver whom the disapproval of the court does not prevent from driving his coach; if you are but mildly censured, you might as well have your name stricken off the roll."

"And it is to your good-will, doubtless, that I shall owe this precious result," said la Peyrade.

"I am proud to believe so," answered du Portail; "for in order to tow you back into port it was necessary to cut away your rigging; unless this had been done, you would always have been trying to navigate under your own sails among the shoals of the middle-classes."

Seeing that he had to play against a strong hand, the adroit Provençal thought it advisable to modify his manner, and in a much more respectful manner he said:

"Permit me to await further explanations before making my acknowledgments."

"Here you stand then," said du Portail. "Twenty-eight, without a sou, without a profession, with antecedents that are—well—very mediocre; with old associates like Dutocq and the 'brave Cérizet'; owing Mademoiselle Thuillier ten thousand francs, which in good conscience you ought to pay (even if your vanity had not led you to promise it); to Madame

Lambert twenty-five thousand francs more, which you of course will be only too glad to replace in her hands; and as an end-all, this marriage, your last hope, your plank of safety, has just been rendered an impossibility. Between ourselves, if I make any reasonable proposition, do you not think you had better place yourself at my disposal?"

"There will always be time to prove the contrary to you; and I cannot form any resolution until your designs are more fully explained," said la Peyrade.

"At my instigation you were spoken to in reference to a marriage," said du Portail; "that marriage is, at least in my idea, closely connected with a past existence by which a kind of hereditary duty devolves upon you. Do you know what that uncle, whom you came to Paris to find about 1829, was doing here? In your family he was considered a millionaire; but he died suddenly, almost a pauper; he did not leave enough money with which to bury him; this was his end."

"Then you knew him?"

"He was my oldest, my best friend," replied du Portail.

"But," said la Peyrade, eagerly, "a sum of one hundred louis, which in my first days in Paris came to me from an unknown source——"

"Was sent by me," replied the gentleman; "unfortunately at that time I was overwhelmed with a rush of business, with which I shall make you acquainted presently; so I could not take that interest in your fortune which the memory of your uncle impressed upon me. This will explain why I left you on the straw in a garret, to ripen, like medlars, to that maturity of misery which brought you into the meshes of a Dutocq and a Cérizet."

"I am not the less grateful, monsieur; if I had known that you were that generous benefactor, who remained unknown to me, I assure you, that without waiting for your request, I would at once have taken occasion to see you, and to thank you——"

"A truce to compliments," said du Portail; "and to come to the serious side of our conference, what would you say if

I were to inform you that that uncle whose protection and assistance you came to Paris to seek was an agent of that secret power which forms the theme of so many absurd fables, and is the object of such silly prejudices."

"I cannot grasp your meaning; may I beg you to be more explicit."

"For example, supposing your uncle were living to-day," said du Portail, "and should say: 'My good nephew, you seek fortune and influence, you wish to rise above the multitude, you wish to play your part in the great events of the epoch, you want to employ an active mind, alert, resourceful, with a slight tendency to intrigue; in short, an opportunity to exert in a higher, more elegant sphere that strength of will and invention now utterly wasted in grappling with that most barren, hide-bound animal on earth—a bourgeois. Well, my good nephew, lower your head, and accompany me through that little door which I will open to you; it gives entrance to a great house, of not much repute, but far above its reputation; the threshold once crossed you will arise powerful, to the height of your genius if there is a spark of genius in you. Statesmen, kings even, will give you their most inmost thoughts; you will be their secret co-laborer; none of the joys that money and the highest power can bestow upon a man will be inaccessible to you.' "

"But, monsieur, while not understanding you, I might remark that my uncle died so poor that, as you inform me, he was buried at the expense of public charity."

"Your uncle," replied du Portail, "was a man of rare talent, but he had a weak side, through which his destiny was compromised; he was eager for pleasure, a spendthrift, without a thought for the future; he wanted to taste those joys intended for the common order of men, but which in great vocations are snares and impediments—the joys of family life. He had a daughter, whom he madly loved; it was through her that terrible enemies made a breach in his life, and prepared the fearful catastrophe that ended it. Your uncle—I enter into your argument, you see—died of quick poison."

"And this you think is an encouragement for me to tread the path in which he would have bidden me follow him?"

"But if I should offer to guide you?" said du Portail.

"You, monsieur!" said la Peyrade, in amazement.

"Yes, I, who was first your uncle's pupil and afterward his protector and providence; I, whose influence for a half-century has had a daily increase; I, who am wealthy, to whom all governments, falling over each other like houses of cards, come to ask for safety and for the power with which to build their future; I, who am the manager of a great theatre of marionettes, which includes in its cast Columbines of the style of Madame de Godollo; I, who to-morrow, if it became necessary to the success of one of my burlesques or dramas, might present myself before your eyes the wearer of the grand cordon of the Legion of Honor, the Golden Fleece, or the Garter. Would you know why neither you nor I will die by poison? Why is it that I, happier than my contemporary kings, can transmit my sceptre to whom I choose? It is because I, like you, my young friend, in spite of your Southern complexion, have been cool and calculating, never tempted to waste my time trifling on the threshold; because my ardor, when circumstances compelled me to use it, never lay deeper than the surface. It is more than likely that you have heard of me; well, for your benefit I will open a window in my darkness; look closely upon me, observe me well; I have not a cloven hoof nor a tail at the base of my spine; on the contrary, I seem to be the most inoffensive of gentlemen in the St. Sulpice quarter; in that quarter where I have enjoyed for five-and-twenty years, I may say, the esteem of all; I am known as du Portail; but to you, by your permission, I shall call myself—CORENTIN."

"Corentin!" exclaimed la Peyrade, with dismay and astonishment.

"Yes, monsieur, and as you must see, by revealing my secret to you I lay my hand upon you and you are enlisted. Corentin, 'the greatest man in the police of modern times,' as the author of an article in the 'Biographies of Living

Men' has said of me—though I ought, to do him justice, to remark that he doesn't know the least thing about my life."

"Monsieur, I can assure you that I shall keep your secret; but as to the position which you desire to offer me; to be in your employ——"

"You are frightened, or at least disquieted," said the ex-gentleman hastily. "Even before considering the matter the mere word terrifies you. The p—o—o—o—lice! You reproach yourself for not sharing that bitter prejudice which brands its brow?"

"It is certainly a necessary institution," said la Peyrade; "I don't know that it is always calumniated. If it is an honorable business, why do those who pursue it conceal themselves?"

"Because all that threatens society," replied Corentin, "and which it is the mission of the police to suppress, is plotted and arranged in the dark. Do thieves and conspirators wear on their hats: 'I am Guillot, the shepherd of this flock;' or ought we when we go to search for them to be p[illegible]ded by a clanging bell to let them know we are coming—[illegible]e health officer does on his rounds every morning to see [illegible]hat the janitors sweep in front of each door?"

"Monsieur," said la Peyrade, "when a sentiment is universal it ceases to be a prejudice, it becomes an opinion; a[illegible] this opinion should be a law to every man who desires his own esteem and that of others."

"And when you despoiled that bankrupt notary," exclaimed Corentin, "you stripped a corpse to enrich the Thuilliers; this, I suppose, you will pretend was in keeping with your self-respect and with the respect of the barristers; and who knows if, in your life, you have not been guilty of blacker deeds? I am a more honest man than you, for outside of my official duties, I have not a dishonorable act to reproach myself with; and when a good deed comes before me, I hasten to do it. My care of the daughter of my old friend, Peyrade, has not been a path strewn with roses. But she was the daughter of your uncle, my old friend. As I feel the years advance, I

offer you my position, to fit you to take my place, a bride with two heaping bags of money——"

"What!" cried la Peyrade, "is that girl my Uncle Peyrade's daughter?"

"Yes; the girl I wish you to marry is the daughter of Peyrade; for he democratized his name, or, if you like it better, she was the daughter of Father Canquoëlle, a name taken from the estate on which your father starves with eleven children. Did your uncle's discretion keep the secret of his family? I know it as thoroughly as if I belonged to it. Before selecting you for your cousin, did I not find out all about you? You turn your nose up at the police, but, as the common folk have it, you owe the best of your nose to the police. Your uncle was of it, and, thanks to the police, he was the confidant, I had almost said the friend, of Louis XVIII., who delighted in his conversation; your cousin is her father's daughter; by your character and your intelligence, and by the absurd position in which you have put yourself—your whole destiny gravitates towards the dénoûment which I propose to you, which is to take my place, if you please, to be the successor of Corentin. That, monsieur, is the question. And do you think that you are not in my power, that you can escape me by any foolish considerations of a bourgeois vanity?"

It was evident that la Peyrade was not so profoundly determined on refusing as might have been thought; for the warmth of the great detective, as well as the cool way in which his person had been appropriated, brought a smile to his lips.

Corentin, in the meantime, had arisen, and was pacing the room with great strides, apparently talking to himself.

"The police!" he cried, "it might be said of the police, as Basil said of calumny to Bartholo: 'The police, monsieur, you know not what you despise.' And in fact," he went on, after a pause, "who are they that despise it? Idiots, who know no better than to insult the power which protects them. Suppress the police, you destroy civilization. Do the police ask the respect of these people? It seeks but to impress them with one sentiment—fear—that great lever which moves mankind; an

impure race, whose horrible instincts God, hell, the executioner, and the gendarme can scarcely restrain."

Stopping in front of la Peyrade, looking at him with a disdainful smile:

"And you are one of those simpletons," continued the panegyrist, "who see in the police nothing but a horde of spies and informers? And you have never dreamed that they were far-seeing statesmen, diplomatists of the first rank, Richelieus in a short robe? But Mercury, monsieur, Mercury, the most intellectual of pagan gods, what then was he but the police incarnate? It is true that he was also the god of thieves. We are better than he, for so far we have not doubled the parts."

"And yet," said la Peyrade, "Vautrin, the famous chief of the detective police——"

"Eh! yes, at the bottom," replied Corentin, resuming his mard "there is always some mud; still, don't make any mistak Vautrin is a genius, but his passions, like those of your uncle, dragged him astray. But mounting higher (for the gist of the whole question is in finding the rung of the ladder on which one must perch): The prefect of police, a minister, honored, respected, flattered—is he a spy? Well, I, m nsieur, I am the prefect of the secret police of diplomacy—of the highest statesmanship; and you hesitate to mount the throne which Charles V. in his old age thought to abdicate? To appear small and yet do great things; to live in a comfortable den like this, and command the light; to have ever at your hand an invisible army always ready, always devoted, always submissive; to know the other side of everything; never to be the dupe of any wire-puller, for you hold all the wires yourself; to peer through every partition; to penetrate all secrets; search all hearts, all consciences—these are the things monsieur, you fear! And yet you were not afraid to wallow in the foul, dark bog of a Thuillier's household; you, a thoroughbred, allowed yourself to be harnessed to a hack, to the ignoble career of an election agent, and of a paper run by a rich bourgeois."

"One must do what one can," replied la Peyrade.

"It is most remarkable," Corentin went on, taking up again his former line of thought, "that language has done us more justice than opinion, for it made the word 'police' the synonym of civilization and the antipodes of savage life when it wrote: *l'État policé.** I can assure you that we care little for the prejudice that tries to injure us; none can understand men as we know them: to know them is to scorn their contempt, as we have contempt for their esteem."

"There is certainly much truth in what you have advanced with so much warmth," said la Peyrade.

"Much truth!" replied Corentin, going back to his chair, "say rather it is *the* truth, nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth. But enough for to-day, monsieur. To be my successor in these functions and to marry your cousin with a dowry that will not be less than five hundred thousand francs, that is my offer. I do not ask you for an answer now. I should have no confidence in a decision not seriously reflected upon. To-morrow I shall be here all the morning; I hope my conviction may be yours."

Dismissing his visitor with a slight curt bow, he added: "I do not say *adieu*, but *au revoir*, Monsieur de la Peyrade."

Then Corentin went to a sideboard, where he found all the necessary materials for preparing a glass of *eau-sucrée*, which he had certainly well earned; and without taking further notice of the Provençal—who took his leave somewhat abashed—appeared to be wholly occupied with this prosaic preparation. Was it indeed necessary that the day after his meeting with Corentin a visit from Madame Lambert, who had become a very importunate and exacting creditor, should influence the decision of la Peyrade? As the tempter had told him the day before, in his character, in his mind, in his aspirations, in the follies of his past life, was there not a combination of effects leading to an irresistible incline tending to the strange solution of his destiny—in the proposal just made to him?

Fate—if we may say it—had been prodigal with the em-

* From the Greek *politeia*—policy; hence, policy of State.—[TRANSLATOR.]

barrassments under which he was to succumb. It was the thirty-first of October, the court vacation was drawing to a close; on the second of November the tribunals would again be in session, and for this day—at the very moment after Madame Lambert had left him—the advocate received a summons to appear before the counsel of his order.

To Madame Lambert, who importuned him eagerly to pay her, under pretence that she had left the house of Monsieur Picot and was going to return at once to her native district, he had said:

"Come here to-morrow at this time and your money will be ready."

To the summons to give an account of his transactions before his peers, he replied that he did not recognize the right of the Board to question him on his private affairs. This was some kind of an answer, certainly. It would lead inevitably to his name being stricken from the rolls, but it seemed in a measure to have an air of dignity and saved his self-love.

Finally, he wrote Thuillier, informing him that his visit to du Portail had resulted in his being obliged to accept the proposition of another marriage. He therefore returned Thuillier's word and took back his own. All this was curtly said, without the slightest expression of regret for the marriage he renounced. A postscript read: "We shall be obliged to meet and discuss my position on the newspaper," hinting that he might also withdraw from that, too. He was careful to make a copy of this letter, so, when later in Corentin's study he was asked as to his night's reflections, he simply presented for all answer the matrimonial renunciation he had written out.

"That is good," said Corentin, "but your position on the paper you had better retain for a little while; that fool's candidacy deranges the plans of the government, we must in some manner trip up the heels of this municipal councilor; as editor-in-chief, you may play him a good trick; I don't think your conscience would revolt at this mission."

"Certainly not," said la Peyrade; "the remembrance of the humiliations to which he has so long exposed me will

give a keen relish to the lash I should apply to that middle-class brood."

"Be cautious," said Corentin, "you are but young, you must guard against revengeful feelings. In our austere profession we love nothing, hate nothing. For us men are the pawns, of wood or ivory according to their quality, with which we play the game. We should be as the sword which cuts what is given it to cut, careful only that it is well sharpened, wishing neither good nor bad to any. Now let us speak of your cousin, to whom I suppose you have some desire to be presented."

La Peyrade was not obliged to pretend eagerness; the feeling was genuine.

"Lydie de la Peyrade," said Corentin, "is nearly thirt but her innocence, joined to a gentle form of mania, has kept her apart from all those passions, ideas, and impressions which rise up in life, and has embalmed her, as one might say, in a kind of perpetual youth. You would not consider her more than twenty years of age. She is fair and graceful. Her refined face is especially noticeable for an expression of angelic mildness. Deprived of her reason as the result of the terrible catastrophe which destroyed her father, her monomania is touching. She always carries in her arms a bundle of linen, which she nurses and fondles as a sick baby. She thinks that all other men except myself and Bruno are doctors; she consults them about her child, and listens to them as to oracles. A crisis which occurred some little time ago has convinced Horace Bianchon, that prince of science, that, if the reality were substituted for this long illusion of motherhood, her reason would be soon completely restored. Is it not a worthy task to bring back light to a soul that is barely clouded? Does it not strike you that the bond of relationship between you makes it more than ever your part to be the means of effecting that cure? Now I will take you to Lydie's presence; remember to play the rôle of doctor; for the refusal to enter into her notion is the only thing that upsets her serenity."

After passing through several rooms, Corentin was on the point of taking la Peyrade into the one usually occupied by Lydie, when she did not need more room to walk back and forth and soothe her imaginary child, when they were suddenly arrested by the sound of two or three chords struck by the hand of a master on a piano of the finest tone.

"What is that?" asked la Peyrade.

"That is Lydie," said Corentin, with what might be termed a sort of paternal pride; "she is an admirable musician; she was an excellent composer when lucid, but lately has not written anything, though she improvises, and in a manner that moves me to the soul—the soul of Corentin," added the little old man, smiling; "that, I think, would be a fine enough compliment for a virtuoso. But sit down and listen. If we were to go in, the concert would immediately come to an end, and the consultation would begin."

La Peyrade was astonished at hearing an improvisation in which the rare union of perfect inspiration and scientific skill opened in his impressionable nature a spring of emotion as profound as it was unexpected. Corentin enjoyed the surprise which the Provençal from moment to moment gave utterance to; and eulogizing his merchandise, Corentin cried:

"*Hein!* How is that played? Liszt could not have done better."

To a very lively *scherzo* the performer added the first notes of an *adagio.*

"Ah! she is going to sing!" said Corentin, recognizing the motif.

"Does she sing, too?" asked la Peyrade.

"Like la Pasta and la Malibran. Listen to that."

After a few measures of a *ritournello en arpeggio,* a vibrating voice was heard, whose melody appeared to stir the Provençal to the profoundest depths of his soul.

"How the music moves you!" said Corentin. "You most undoubtedly were made for each other."

With a gesture la Peyrade silenced the speaker; and as the notes fell, increasing in power from moment to moment, his

emotion extorted a cry which in turn visibly impressed Corentin.

"Oh, my God! the same air! the same voice!"

"Have you—do you mean—ever met Lydie before?" asked the great detective.

"I don't know. I—I think not," answered la Peyrade, in a stammering manner; "and yet in any case it must have been long ago—— But that air! That voice! It seems to me ——"

"Let us go in," said Corentin, suddenly pushing open the door and pulling the young man after him into the room.

Lydie, sitting with her back to the door, and prevented by the sound of the piano from hearing them, did not notice their entrance. La Peyrade advanced a step. No sooner had he seen the face of the crazy girl than:

"It is she!" he cried, excitedly, wildly clasping his hands over his head.

"Silence!" cried Corentin.

But Lydie had heard Théodose's exclamation, and turning round she fixed her attention on Corentin.

"How naughty and troublesome you are to come and bother me," said she. "You know very well I don't like being listened to. Oh!" she added, seeing the black dress of la Peyrade, "you have brought the doctor. It is very kind of you. I was going to send for him. The little one has done nothing but cry all the morning. I have tried to sing her to sleep, but with no result."

Then she arose and ran for what she called her child in a corner of the room. As she went toward la Peyrade, carrying her precious bundle in one hand, having no eyes but for the insane creation of her diseased brain, Lydie was busy in arranging the cap of her little darling; but as she approached Théodose,—pale, trembling, with fixed eyes, now having a clear view of Mademoiselle de la Peyrade,—he drew back in evident terror, not pausing until a chair behind him stopped his progress; losing his equilibrium, he fell into it.

So strong a man as Corentin, knowing as he did every in-

cident in the tragedy by which Lydie had lost her reason, had already divined and understood the whole story; but he conceived the idea of letting the bright light of proof shine in upon this fearful darkness.

"Look, doctor," said Lydie, taking off the wrappings, while, as she detached them, putting the pins between her lips, "does she not grow thinner and thinner?"

La Peyrade was unable to reply. He buried his face in his handkerchief; his breath came so fast that he was incapable of uttering a word.

Then in a gesture of feverish impatience, to which her mental state predisposed her:

"But look at her, doctor," she cried, pulling his arm violently and thus compelling him to show his features. "My God!" said she, when she saw the face of the Provençal.

And, dropping the bundle of linen, she started back; her eyes grew haggard; she passed her clammy hands through her hair and over her forehead, and seemed to be making a frantic effort to revive some dormant memory to her mind. Then like a frightened filly who comes to smell an object that has alarmed it, she slowly neared the Provençal, stooping to look into his face, which he kept lowered, and amid a profound silence examined him for a few seconds. Suddenly a terrible cry escaped her throat, she sought refuge in the arms of Corentin, and, pressing against him with all her strength:

"Save me! Save me!" she shrieked. "It is he; the wretch, the villain! That is he who did it all!"

And with her finger extended she seemed to nail the miserable object of her aversion to the spot.

After this explosion she stammered a few disconnected words and closed her eyes. Corentin felt all her muscles relaxing, which a moment before had held him as in a vise, received in his arms the unconscious girl before la Peyrade had recovered sufficiently to assist him, and laid her on the couch.

"Do not stay here, monsieur," said Corentin. "Go into my study; I will join you presently."

Shortly after, leaving the sick girl in the care of Katt and Bruno, and having sent Perrache for Dr. Bianchon, Corentin rejoined la Peyrade.

"You see," said he, with solemnity, "that while following up this marriage with a sort of passionate zeal, I was doing the will of God."

"Monsieur," said la Peyrade, with compunction, "I should indeed confess to you——"

"It is useless," interrupted Corentin, "you can tell me nothing I do not already know; on the contrary, there is much I can tell you. Old Peyrade, your uncle, in the hope of gaining a dowry for his idolized daughter, entered into a dangerous private enterprise; a thing I would advise you to always avoid. He encountered that Vautrin, of whom you spoke yesterday, and whom the police had not then absorbed, as it did afterwards, on his way. Your uncle, clever as he was, could not cope with that man, who rejected no aid to success—neither murder, poison, nor rape. To paralyze your uncle's efforts, Lydie was not indeed abducted, but enticed to a seemingly respectable house; there she was kept concealed for ten days. She was told this was done at her father's wish, so, not being alarmed, she spent her time—well, you remember how she can sing."

"Oh!" ejaculated la Peyrade, covering his face with his hands.

"Held as a hostage," continued Corentin, "the unfortunate young girl, in case her father did not do as was required of him within ten days, was reserved for a most horrible fate. A narcotic and a man were to play the rôle of executioner with the daughter of Sejanus——"

"Monsieur, monsieur, have mercy," groaned la Peyrade.

"I told you yesterday that you might have more on your conscience than that house of the Thuilliers'; but you were young then. Without experience, bringing with you the brutality of your country, you had that frenzied Southern blood, which on occasion flings itself blindly on. Then your relationship was known to those who were plotting the ruin of

this new Clarissa Harlowe: the refined cruelty of using you as a tool had something so diabolically attractive that even a shrewder man and a more hardened roué than you would hardly have escaped the entanglements of which you were the object; fortunately Providence has permitted, in this appalling history, nothing irreparable. The same poison, as it may be employed, gives death or health."

"But, monsieur," said la Peyrade, "shall I not always be an object of horror to her?"

"The doctor, monsieur," said Katt, opening the door.

"How is Mademoiselle Lydie?" asked la Peyrade, eagerly.

"Quite calm," answered Katt; "and just now when we persuaded her to go to bed—though she did not want to go, saying she was not ill—I took her the bundle of rags: 'What do you suppose I want with that, my poor Katt?' said she with a puzzled air: 'if you want me to play with a doll, get me one that is made with more care and turned out in better shape than that one.'"

"You see," said Corentin to the Provençal, "you have become the lance of Achilles."

Then he left the room to receive Dr. Bianchon.

Left alone, Théodose had for some time given himself up to reflections which may readily be conceived, when the door of the study opened and Bruno, the valet-de-chambre, introduced Cérizet.

Seeing la Peyrade, the clerk cried out:

"Ha! ha! I knew it: I knew you would see du Portail in the end. And the marriage—how is it coming on?"

"It is of yours rather that we expect news," said la Peyrade.

"The deuce! then you have heard of it? My faith! yes, my dear. All things must have an end, after a long voyage on storm-swept seas. You know the bride, do you?"

"Yes, a young actress, Olympe Cardinal, a protégée of the Minards, who are to give her thirty thousand francs for setting her up."

"And that," said Cérizet, "added to thirty thousand promised by du Portail, if your marriage takes place, and the old

twenty-five I got out of your marriage which didn't come to pass, makes up a total capital of eighty-five thousand francs; with that and a pretty wife a man must be forsaken of heaven if he cannot succeed in a few speculations. But I have something in the first place to discuss with you. Du Portail sent me to see if we could not arrange some scheme to prevent Thuillier's election. Can you suggest any scheme?"

"No," replied la Peyrade; "and, in the state of mind in which I have been left by the conversation I have just had with Monsieur du Portail, I don't feel any way imaginative either."

"Well, this is the situation: the government, afraid that Thuillier might get elected, has another candidate in hand, who has not yet been announced, because the ministerial arrangements with him are difficult. In the meantime the candidacy of Thuillier is making headway; Minard, on whom they had counted for a diversion, afraid of his popularity, mopes in a corner and takes no steps; the seizure of your pamphlet has given your stupid protégé a certain perfume of popularity; in brief, the ministry fear that he may succeed, and nothing would be more disagreeable to them than his election. Pompous idiots like Thuillier are embarrassing when in the Opposition; they are pitchers without handles, you cannot tell how to hold them."

"Monsieur Cérizet," said la Peyrade, beginning to put on a patronizing tone, and wishing, moreover, to know how far his questioner was in the confidence of Corentin, "you seem to be well acquainted with the plans of the government. Have you found the way to a certain money box in the Rue de Grenelle?"

"Oh, no, indeed; what I have told you," replied Cérizet—"for it seems that we are not on intimate terms—I received from Monsieur du Portail."

"Ah!" said la Peyrade, lowering his voice; "who is this du Portail? You appear to have been intimate with him for some time. A man so penetrative as yourself should have gauged the depths of this person who, between you and me, seems to partake somewhat of the mysterious."

"My friend," said Cérizet, "du Portail is a very strong man: he's an old sly-boots, who strikes me as having been employed in the administration of the public domains, where he may have had some office in the departments suppressed on the fall of the empire; for instance, the department of the Dyle, of the Doire, of the Sambre-et-Meuse, or of the Deux-Nèthes."

"Yes?——" said la Peyrade.

"There, it seems to me," said Cérizet, "is where he made his money, and, being an ingenious kind of fellow, and having a natural daughter to marry, he has concocted this philanthropic yarn of her being the daughter of an old friend named Peyrade; your name being the same suggested, I suppose, the idea of marrying her to you, for he must marry her to some one."

"That may be so," replied la Peyrade, "but explain his connection with the government and his interest in the elections."

"That's easy enough," replied Cérizet. "Du Portail is a man who loves money, and likes to finger it; he has done some little service to Rastignac, that great manipulator of elections, a compatriot of his, who in return gives him hints in his stock-gambling on the Bourse."

"Did he give you all this confidential information?" asked la Peyrade.

"What do you take me for?" replied Cérizet; "with this worthy man, who has already promised me thirty thousand francs, as you see, I play the simpleton, but I make Bruno talk; you may ally yourself to this family without fear; why, my dear boy, this du Portail is enormously wealthy; he can get you made a sub-prefect, from whence to a prefecture, with the fortune you will have, is but a step."

"Thank you," said la Peyrade, "for this information. At least I shall know on which foot I stand. But how came you to know him?"

"Oh! that is quite a history; by my intervention he was able to recover a lot of diamonds that had been stolen."

At this moment Corentin appeared:

"All is going well," said he to la Peyrade. "There are

signs of returning reason. Bianchon, to whom I have explained everything, would like to talk to you, so, if Monsieur Cérizet will excuse us, we will postpone until this evening our discussion of the Thuillier matter."

"Well, here he is at last," said Cérizet, slapping la Peyrade on the shoulder.

"Yes," said Corentin, "and you know what I promised you; you can rely upon it."

Cérizet went off joyously.

On the day following that on which the conference between Corentin, la Peyrade, and Cérizet in relation to putting Thuillier's candidacy in a state of siege, the latter was discussing with Brigitte Théodose's letter renouncing Céleste's hand, particularly dwelling on the postscript, which intimated that la Peyrade might not continue as editor of the "Écho de la Bièvre." At this moment Henri, his servant, came in to ask if he would receive M. Cérizet.

Thuillier's first impulse was to deny himself to this undesirable visitor. Then, thinking better of it, he reflected that Cérizet might prove a resource if he were left in the lurch by la Peyrade. He therefore directed that he should be admitted. His reception was, nevertheless, very cool, and in some sort expectant. As to Cérizet, he appeared unembarrassed, and like a man who had calculated the consequences of his step.

"Well, my dear sir," said he to Thuillier, "you are beginning, I suppose, to get posted as to the Sieur la Peyrade?"

"What do you mean by that?" asked the old beau.

"Well, I should think a man who for a long time has been intriguing to marry your goddaughter abruptly breaks off the marriage, as he will sometime also do about the iron-clad contract he made you sign about his editorship, cannot be the object of the blind confidence you formerly reposed in him."

"So," said Thuillier, quickly, "you know something then of his intentions to leave the paper?"

"No," said the banker of the poor, "we are not on good terms now, and I do not see him, much less would he give me his confidence. I draw my inference from what I know of his

character; and you may be certain that if he finds it to his interest to leave you, he will cast you off as he would an old shoe."

"You had some dealings with him then before you became manager?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Cérizet. "That business of your house; I started the hare in that. He was to put me in communication with you and make me the first lessee; but the unfortunate event of the bidding-in gave him the opportunity to swindle me and to keep all the profits himself."

"Profits!" exclaimed Thuillier. "I can't see that he got anything out of that beyond the marriage that he refused today."

"What!" said the usurer, "ten thousand francs for the Cross which you never received; the twenty-five thousand due Madame Lambert, which you went surety for, and which, like a good boy, you will probably have to pay."

"What's this I hear," cried Brigitte, bounding out of her chair; "you stand security for twenty-five thousand francs?"

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied Cérizet, "back of the sum that woman was said to have lent him there was some mystery, and if I have not solved it, there was certainly something very foul at the bottom of it; but la Peyrade was smart enough not only to whitewash himself before your brother, but also to get him to secure——"

"But," interrupted Thuillier, "if you have not seen him, how did you learn that I had become his surety?"

"From the servant herself, monsieur, who tells the whole story now she is sure of being paid."

"Well," said Brigitte to her brother, "you are a smart business man!"

"Mademoiselle," said Cérizet, "I merely wanted to bother Monsieur Thuillier a little; but in reality I do not think you will lose anything. Without knowing the details regarding this marriage of la Peyrade's, it is difficult for me to believe that the family would wish him to remain under the stigma of these two dishonorable debts; and if it becomes necessary I will interfere in the matter."

"Monsieur," said Thuillier, "in thanking you for your officious intervention, permit me to say that it surprises me somewhat, for the manner in which we parted would not lead me to expect such an action."

"There, now," said Cérizet, "do you think I harbor malice on that account. I pitied you, that was all. I saw you were magnetized, and I said to myself that it would be better to let la Peyrade experiment on you; but I knew very well that justice would be done me some day. As for that gentleman, his evil deeds are not far apart."

"Pardon me," said Thuillier. "I do not consider the rupture of the marriage in question an evil deed. It was done, in a certain way, by mutual agreement."

"And the embarrassment he proposed to leave you under in suddenly deserting his post as editor-in-chief, and the debt for which he has made you responsible? Do you consider these things also agreeable?"

"Monsieur Cérizet," said Thuillier, holding himself on his reserve, "as I once told la Peyrade, no man is indispensable; now, if the editorship of my paper becomes vacant, I can readily find persons eager to proffer their services to me."

"Is it for my benefit you speak like that?" asked Cérizet. "You make a bad mistake if it ; for if you were to ask for my assistance I should be obliged to refuse you. For a long time I have been disgusted with journalism. I allowed myself, I don't know why, to be inveigled by la Peyrade into making one more campaign with you. But the result of this last experience has cured me of undertaking another. I came to see you about another thing."

"Ah!" said Thuillier.

"Yes," replied Cérizet; "remembering the handsome manner in which you acted in the business of this house, in which you do me the honor of receiving me, it occurred to me that I could not do better than to call your attention to a similar case I have in hand. It is a purely business transaction, and I expect to make my profit on it. I shall not act as la Peyrade did. I shall not ask the hand of your goddaughter, or say that

I do this out of friendship and devotion to you. It is a business venture, and I want my share of the profits. Then I believe mademoiselle finds the administration of this estate burdensome, for I notice that at present all your stores are to let. Very well, if she would reconsider the idea of principal tenant, that la Peyrade stifled, that might be taken into account in sharing the profits. This, monsieur, is the purpose of my visit, and you see that it has nothing to do with the journal."

"But this business?" said Brigitte, "that is the first thing to know."

"It is exactly," said Cérizet, "the contrary to that transaction you had with la Peyrade. You got this house for next to nothing, but were worried by a higher bidder. Now, this is a farm, in Beauce, which has just been sold for a crumb of bread, as they say, and at a small advance you could get it at a fabulously low price."

Then Cérizet set forth the details, which had more fascination for Brigitte than they would be likely to have for the reader. The statement was clear and precise; it had an attraction for the old maid; and Thuillier himself, in spite of his instinctive wariness, was forced to admit that the business in question had the appearance of being a good speculation.

"Only," said Brigitte, "we must see the farm."

It will be recalled that in the business of her present house, she would not give the least encouragement to la Peyrade until she had seen the place.

"Nothing is easier," said Cérizet. "I want to see it myself, in case we should go into the venture; and I intended making an excursion there to-day. If you say so, I'll take you down, calling at your door for you this afternoon with a chaise; we shall be there early to-morrow morning, examine the farm, have breakfast, and return in time for dinner."

"A post-chaise," said Brigitte, "is very lordly. The diligence seems to me——"

"They are too uncertain," said Cérizet. "But you need not think of the expense, for I shall have to go, and otherwise it would be alone; I am only too happy to offer you two seats

in my carriage. If we come to an agreement, when we settle the details, we will divide the expenses."

To the avaricious little gains often determine great events; after a little resistance, *pro forma*, Brigitte accepted, and that day the three set out on the road to Chartres, Cérizet advising Thuillier not to send word to la Peyrade about this journey, lest the Provençal might take advantage of his short absence to play him some mean trick.

The next evening by five o'clock the trio had returned; and the brother and sister, who kept their opinions to themselves in Cérizet's presence, were both of one mind, that the purchase would be a good thing. They found the land of the best quality, the farm-buildings in a perfect state, the cattle and stock in good condition; and this idea of becoming the mistress of rural property seemed to Brigitte the final consecration of opulence.

"Minard," said she, "has nothing but his town-house and invested capital, whereas we shall not only have those but a country place besides. One can't be really rich without that."

Thuillier was not sufficiently charmed by this dream, the realization of which, moreover, was in the distant future, as to forget the paper and his candidacy. He no sooner got back than he asked for the "Écho" issued that morning.

"It has not yet been delivered," replied the servant.

"That's a pretty delivery," said Thuillier, peevishly, "when even the owner cannot get served."

Although it was near dinner-time, and after his journey he would have preferred taking a bath to going to the Rue d'Enfer, he ordered a hack and drove to the office of the "Écho." There a new disappointment awaited him; the new issue was made up and all the employes had left, even la Peyrade. Coffinet, who, not being at his post as office boy, should at least be found at his post as concierge, had "gone of an errand," said his wife, and had taken the key of the closet in which the files of the paper were locked up. It was impossible to get a copy of the journal which the unhappy proprietor had come so far to procure.

To paint Thuillier's indignation would be impossible. Marching back and forth with great strides in the editor's office, talking aloud to himself, as people often do under great excitement, he cried:

"To turn them all out!" We are compelled to omit his further objurgations.

While he fulminated his anathema there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," thundered Thuillier, in a voice of wrath and frantic impatience.

Minard appeared, and threw himself into his arms.

"My good, my excellent friend," began the Mayor of the Eleventh, his embrace ending in an earnest handshaking.

"Why? what is it?" said Thuillier, understanding nothing of this vehement demonstration.

"Ah! my dear friend," continued Minard, "such an admirable proceeding, one may say really chivalrous, most disinterested! The effect throughout the arrondissement is enormous."

"But what? another blow!" exclaimed Thuillier, impatiently.

"The article, the new departure," said Minard, "all so noble, so elevated."

"But what article? What departure?" said the owner of the "Écho," beside himself with irritation.

"This morning's article," said Minard.

"This morning's article?"

"Come, you didn't write it while you slept, or are you, like Monsieur Jourdain, writing prose, heroical without knowing it?"

"I! I have written no article," cried Thuillier. "I have been absent from Paris since yesterday. I don't even know what is in the paper this morning, and there is no office-boy here to give me a copy."

"I have one," said Minard, pulling the much-desired number from his pocket. "If the editorial is not yours, you must have inspired it, and, in any case, the deed is done."

Thuillier had snatched the sheet that Minard held out to him, and devoured, rather than read, the following:

For a long time, the owner of this regenerated journal submitted, without complaint or reply, to the cowardly insinuations with which a venal press insults all citizens who, strong in their convictions, refuse to pass under the Caudine Forks of power. So during this long time, a man, who has given proof of his devotion and abnegation in the important functions of an ædile of Paris, has endured the imputation of being nothing but an ambitious intriguer. M. Jérôme Thuillier, strong in his dignity, has suffered these coarse attacks to pass with his scorn, but, encouraged by this contemptuous silence, the stipendiaries of the press have dared to state that this journal, an outcome of intense conviction and disinterested patriotism, was but the stepping-stone of a man, the speculation of a seeker after an election. M. Jérôme Thuillier, in his high dignity, has held himself immovable before these shameless imputations because truth and justice are patient, and he wished to crush the reptile with a blow. The day of execution has arrived.

"A devil of a la Peyrade!" said Thuillier, stopping short at that phrase. "How he hits it off."

"It is magnificent," said Minard.

Reading aloud, Thuillier went on:

All the world, enemies and friends, can testify that M. Jérôme Thuillier has done nothing to seek a candidacy which was spontaneously offered him.

"That's evident," said Thuillier, interrupting himself. Then he continued:

But seeing his sentiments have been so shamefully misrepresented, his intentions so foully travestied, M. Thuillier owes it to himself, and, above all, to the great national party in which he is but the humblest soldier, to give an example which shall confound the vile sycophants of power.

"Truly, la Peyrade gives me full credit," said Thuillier, pausing again in his reading. "I see now why he didn't send me the paper; he wanted to enjoy my surprise: 'Confound

the vile sycophants of power,'" repeated he, after rolling it in his mind:

M. Thuillier was so far from founding a paper in opposition to the dynasty to support and promote his election, that at the very time when his election seems to be assured, and most disheartening for his rivals, he here publicly declares, and in the most formal, absolute, and irrevocable terms, that he RENOUNCES HIS CANDIDACY.

"What? How?" cried Thuillier, thinking he had misread or misunderstood.

"Go on," said the Mayor of the Eleventh.

And as Thuillier, with a bewildered manner, seemed indisposed to continue his reading, Minard took the paper in his hands and read, in his stead:

He withdraws from the contest and requests the electors to transfer to M. Minard, mayor of the eleventh arrondissement, and his friend and colleague in his municipal functions, all the votes they seemed disposed to honor him with.

"But this is infamous!" cried Thuillier, recovering his speech, "you have bought that Jesuit, la Peyrade."

"So," said Minard, stupefied by Thuillier's attitude, "the article was not arranged between you?"

"The wretch has profited by my absence to slip it in the paper; this explains why he prevented a copy reaching me."

"My dear fellow," said Minard, "what you are saying will seem incredible to the public."

"But I tell you it is treason, an infamous trick. Renounce my candidacy—why should I renounce it?"

"You will fully understand, my friend," said Minard, "that if this is an abuse of confidence, I am made desolate; but I have issued my electoral circular, and, by my faith! luck to the lucky."

"Leave me," said Thuillier, pointing to the door, "you have paid for this hoax."

"Monsieur Thuillier," said Minard, in a threatening tone,

"I would advise you not to repea[illegible]se words unless you intend giving me satisfaction."

Happily for Thuillier, whose profession of faith on "civic courage" we have already given, he was relieved from a reply by Coffinet, who opened the door of the editorial sanctum, announcing:

"The gentlemen electors of the twelfth arrondissement."

This consisted of a deputation of five, an apothecary being the president, who addressed Thuillier in the following words:

"We have come, monsieur, after having read an article in this morning's 'Echo de la Bièvre,' to ask you what is the aim and object of this article, believing it incredible that after having solicited our suffrages, you come at the moment of election, and by an overstrained Puritanism, throw disorder and disunion into our ranks, and probably assure the return of the ministerial candidate. A candidate does not belong to himself; he belongs to the electors who have promised to honor him with their votes. But," he finished up, casting his eye on Minard, "the presence in these precincts of the candidate whom you have gone out of your way to recommend to us, indicates a connivance between you; and it is needless to ask who has been betrayed here."

"No, gentlemen, no," said Thuillier, "I have not renounced my candidacy; that editorial was written unknown to me and without my consent. To-morrow the denial will appear in the same paper; you will learn, too, that the infamous wretch who betrayed me has been dismissed the editorship."

"Then," said the orator, "notwithstanding your contrary declaration, you are still a candidate and will support the Opposition?"

"Yes, gentlemen, to the death," said Thuillier; "and I beg you to use all your influence in the quarter to counteract this betrayal until I can officially give it the most formal denial."

"Very good! Very good!" cried the deputation.

"And as to the presence here of my rival, Monsieur Minard, I did not solicit it; and at the very moment when you entered I was engaged in the liveliest explanation with him."

"Very good! Very good!" said the electors again.

Then, after a cordial handshaking with the apothecary, Thuillier conducted them to the outer door.

On returning to the editorial room Thuillier said:

"My dear Minard, I withdraw the words which wounded you; but you can now see that my indignation was not without reason."

Again Coffinet opened the door and announced:

"Gentlemen, the electors of the eleventh arrondissement."

This time the arrondissement consisted of seven persons. A hosier was the president; his little speech ran:

"Monsieur, it is with a sincere admiration that we have learned this morning through your journal of your act of public spirit, which has greatly touched us all. You have proved, by thus retiring, a disinterestedness far from the ordinary, and the esteem of your fellow-citizens——"

"Permit me," said Thuillier, interrupting him, "I cannot allow you to continue; the article upon which you congratulate me was inserted by mistake."

"What!" said the hosier, "you don't retire from the contest?"

"Monsieur," said Thuillier, "will you be kind enough to request the electors to wait for to-morrow's paper. I will furnish the most specific explanations. Yesterday's article was the result of a misunderstanding."

"So much the worse, monsieur," said the hosier, "if you lose this chance to place yourself in the eyes of your fellow-citizens by the side of Washington and other famous men of antiquity."

"To-morrow, gentlemen," said Thuillier. "I am none the less sensible of your courtesy, and I trust when you know the whole truth I shall not suffer in your esteem."

"This seems a funny sort of a game," shouted an elector.

"Yes," growled another, "it seems like they were making fools of us."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the president, checking them, "to-morrow we will read the explanation of the candidate."

Whereupon the deputation retired.

It is hardly probably that Thuillier would have gone further with them than the office door, but if he had so intended it was prevented by the entrance of la Peyrade.

"I have just come from your house, my dear fellow," said the Provençal, "they told me I should find you here."

"And you came, doubtless, to explain to me the strange editorial you allowed yourself to insert in my name?"

"Exactly," said la Peyrade. "The man of whom you know, and whose far-reaching influence you have already felt, confided in me yesterday, to the interest both of yourself and the government, and I saw it was inevitable that you would be defeated. I therefore arranged a dignified and honorable retreat for you."

"Very good, monsieur," said Thuillier, "but you will understand that from the present you are no longer the editor of this paper."

"That is what I came to tell you."

"And doubtless also to settle up the little account we have together."

"Gentlemen," said Minard, "I see you have business to attend; I make you my bow."

Minard gone:

"Here are ten thousand francs," said la Peyrade, "which I beg you to hand to Mademoiselle Brigitte; here, also, is the bond by which you secured to Madame Lambert the payment of twenty-five thousand francs, to which is attached her receipt in full."

"Quite right, monsieur," said Thuillier.

La Peyrade bowed and went out.

"Serpent!" said Thuillier, watching him out.

"Cérizet struck the right word," said la Peyrade, "he is a pompous idiot."

The blow struck at Thuillier's candidacy was mortal, but Minard did not profit thereby. While they disputed for the suffrages of the electors, a "castle-man," an aide-de-camp of the King, arrived on the scene, his hands full of tobacco

licenses, and other the like electioneering small change, and, like the third thief, he stole in between the two candidates who were busy eating each other. It goes without saying that Brigitte did not get her farm at Beauce; this was only a ruse, by the help of which Thuillier was enticed from Paris to enable la Peyrade to deliver his knock-out blow. A service rendered the government, and which was at the same time a full revenge for the humiliations the Provençal had suffered.

Thuillier had some general suspicions as to Cérizet's complicity, but that gentleman justified himself, and, by engineering the sale of the "Écho de la Bièvre," which had become a nightmare to its unfortunate proprietor, he made himself as white as snow. Bought out by Corentin, the poor sheet of the Opposition became a "canard" sold on Sundays in the taverns after being concocted in the den of the police.

About a month after the scene in which la Peyrade had been shown that through a crime in the past his future was irrevocably settled, he had married his victim, who now had long intervals of lucidity, though the full return of her reason could not be counted upon until the time and conditions previously indicated by the physicians had become fulfilled. One morning Corentin was closeted with his successor. Taking part in his labors, and serving his apprenticeship for the delicate and arduous duties of his office, Théodose did not bring that acumen and spirit into the work that Corentin desired. He saw that his pupil had cherished a feeling of degradation; time would heal the wound, but the callus was as yet unformed.

Opening a number of sealed envelopes containing his agents' reports, Corentin ran his eyes over these papers, many more useless than might be supposed, since he threw them contemptuously into a waste basket, whence they were taken out in a lump to be burned. But the great detective gave particular attention to one he came across; as he read it he slightly smiled once or twice, and when he had finished:

"Here," said he to la Peyrade, passing the manuscript over,

"this will interest you; it shows that our profession, which at present seems to you unpleasantly tragic, does at times dabble in comedy, in addition. Read it aloud, it will amuse us."

Before la Peyrade had commenced to read:

"I ought to let you know," added Corentin, "that this report is from a man named Henri, whom Madame Komorn placed in service with the Thuilliers."

"So," said la Peyrade, "you have servants to your hand; is that one of your methods?"

"Sometimes," replied Corentin, "to know all, all means must be utilized; but, on this subject, many lies are spoken about us. It is not true that the police make a regular system of this, and at certain epochs, by means of a general enrollment of lackeys and chambermaids, have spread a vast network through the private life of families. Nothing is arbitrary in our method of operating; we adapt ourselves to time and circumstance. But I wanted an eye and ear in the Thuillier household, so I let the Godollo loose upon it; she in turn installed one of our men there, quite an intelligent fellow, as you will learn. But suppose another servant came and said he was willing to sell me the secrets of his master, I should have him arrested and let a warning be sent to the family to distrust the other servants."

Monsieur the Chief of the Secret Police (wrote to Corentin the man named Henri), I did not stay long with the little baron; he is a man wholly absorbed in frivolous pleasures; there was nothing to gather worthy of a report. I have another situation, though, where I have seen a number of things which have a bearing on the mission entrusted to me by Madame de Godollo; I take the liberty of acquainting you with them. The household in which I am now in *service* is that of an old professor, Monsieur Picot, who lives on a first floor, Place de la Madeleine, in the suite and house lately occupied by my former masters, the Thuilliers.

"What!" cried la Peyrade, interrupting himself, "Old Picot, that ruined old lunatic, occupying such spiendid apartments?"

"Go on, go on!" cried Corentin; "life is full of stranger things than that; you will find the explanation lower; our correspondents—it's one of their defects—are too fond of flooding us with details; they are always over careful in dotting their *i*'s."

The man Henri went on:

The Thuilliers, some time ago, left here to return to their Latin quarter. Mademoiselle Brigitte never really liked our sphere; her total lack of education made her uncomfortable. Because I spoke correctly she dubbed me "the orator," and her porter she disliked, because, being sexton at the Madeleine church, he has some manners; she even complained of the market-people in the market at the rear of the church, and said they gave themselves "capable" airs, because they are not so coarse-tongued as those of the Halle, and laughed when she tried to beat down their prices. She has let her house now to an ugly man with only half a nose, one Cérizet, who pays a rent of fifty-five thousand francs. This leaseholder seems to know his road about; he has just married an actress at a minor theatre and was about to occupy this floor, using it also as offices for a company issuing policies for marriage-portions, when Monsieur Picot, arriving from England with his wife, a very wealthy Englishwoman, saw the suite of rooms and offered so large a rental that Monsieur Cérizet felt constrained to accept it. It was then that being introduced by Monsieur Pascal, the janitor, with whom I was in friendly relations, I took service with Monsieur Picot.

"Monsieur Picot, married to a very rich Englishwoman," said la Peyrade, again interrupting himself; "it is inconceivable!"

"Read on," said Corentin; "you will comprehend later."

The fortune of my new master is quite a history, and I speak of it to Monsieur the Chief because of another person in whose marriage Madame de Godollo was mixed up,—a Monsieur Félix Phellion, the inventor of a star,—who in despair at not being able to marry that demoiselle whom they wanted to give to Monsieur la Peyrade, of whom Madame de Godollo made such an ass—

"Scoundrel!" said the Provençal, in a parenthesis; "is that how he speaks of me? He doesn't know yet with whom he has to deal."

Corentin laughed heartily and told his pupil to go ahead.

--and who in despair at not being allowed to marry her had gone off to England, whence he was to set off on a journey round the world; just a lover's notion. Hearing of this departure, Monsieur Picot, his old professor, who is much interested in him, went after him to prevent this nonsense, which was not a difficult matter. The English are naturally very jealous about discoveries, and when they saw Monsieur Phellion about to embark with their own professors they asked him if he had an order from the Admiralty; not being provided with this, they laughed in his face and would not permit him on board at all; they feared he would prove more learned than they.

"Your Monsieur Henri doesn't seem to think a great deal of the *entente cordiale*," said la Peyrade, gayly.

"Yes," replied Corentin, "you will be struck in the reports of our agents with this general and continued spirit of calumniation. But what can be done? we cannot expect angels to take up the trade of spies."

Left upon the shore, Telemachus and Mentor (you see our men are literary, interjected la Peyrade) thought best to return to France; they were about doing so when Monsieur Picot received a letter such as none but an Englishwoman could have written. It said that the writer had read his theory of "Perpetual Motion," and had also heard of his wonderful discovery of a star; she regarded him as a genius at least equal to Newton; if the hand of her who addressed him, joined to eighty thousand pounds, or two million francs, suited his convenience, she was at his disposal. Monsieur Picot liked the offer; he met the English lady, a woman of forty at the least, with a red nose, long teeth, and wearing spectacles. He had intended offering her his pupil, but he saw that this was out of the question, so he told her that he was old, half-blind, had not discovered the star, and did not possess a sou. The Englishwoman replied that Milton was not a young man and

was stone-blind; that Monsieur Picot appeared to have a cataract, as she knew, for she was a surgeon's daughter and had performed operations; as for the star, she did not care much about that; that the author of "Perpetual Motion" was, and had been for ten years past, the man of her dreams; and she again offered her hand with a dowry of eighty thousand pounds sterling. Monsieur Picot made answer that if his sight were restored and she would consent to live in Paris, for he hated England, he would permit himself to be married. The operation was successfully performed, and at the end of three weeks the newly wedded couple arrived in the capital. All these details I learned from madame's maid, with whom I am on intimate terms.

"You see, the conceited puppy!" said Corentin, laughing.

But the remainder of what I have to inform Monsieur the Chief are facts of which I speak *de visu*. As soon as Monsieur and Madame Picot were installed in their new apartments, which were most sumptuously and comfortably furnished, my master instructed me to send a certain number of invitations to dinner—to the Thuillier family, the Minard family, the Colleville family, and a few others who had attended a dinner at which Monsieur Picot had had a funny encounter with Mademoiselle Thuillier. All the persons who had received these invitations were so astonished to learn that old Father Picot had married money, and occupied the old apartments of the Thuillers, that they made a general rendezvous at the house of Monsieur Pascal, the concierge, to see if they were not the dupes of a practical joke. Having ascertained that the invitations were *sincere* and *veritable*, the whole company were on hand at the time named, but Monsieur Picot did not appear. The guests were received by madame, who does not speak French and could only say: "My husband will soon be here;" at last Monsieur Picot arrived, and they were stupefied on seeing, instead of a shabby, blind old man, a handsome, hale, young old man, carrying his years jauntily, like Monsieur Ferville, of the Gymnase, and saying:

"I beg your pardon, ladies, for not being here when you arrived, but I was at the Academy of Sciences, awaiting the result of an election—that of Monsieur Félix Phellion, whom you all know, who was unanimously elected less three votes."

The news seemed to be well received by the company.

"I must also ask your pardon, ladies, for my rather peculiar behavior in this very place, a few weeks ago. My excuses are my late infirmity, the annoyances of a law-suit, and an old housekeeper who robbed and plagued me in a thousand ways and of whom I have the happiness of being now delivered. To-day you see me rejuvenated, married to an amiable spouse, and with only one cloud to obscure my happiness—that of my young friend who has been crowned by the Academy; all here are more or less guilty toward him; I, for my ingratitude, when he turned over to me the benefits of his discovery and the reward of his immortal labors; which was to become later, in drawing me to England, the cause of the happiness which has come to me in my old age; that young lady I see there with tears in her eyes, for having foolishly accused him of atheism; that other stern-looking one, for replying with harshness to his proposals made by his worthy father, whose white hairs she should rather have honored; Monsieur Thuillier, for having sacrificed him to his ambition; Monsieur Colleville, for not having done his part as a father, and choosing the most worthy man; Monsieur Minard, for giving in to his jealousy and trying to foist his son in his place. There are but two present who have done him common justice—Madame Thuillier and Monsieur the Abbé Gondrin. I shall now ask that man of God whether we may not almost doubt Divine justice, when we see this generous young man, the victim of all of us, tossed at the mercy of the waves and tempest, to which for three long years he is consigned before he returns?"

"Providence is all powerful, monsieur," said the abbé; "God will protect Monsieur Félix Phellion in the midst of peril; in three years let us have the firm hope that he will be safely restored to us."

"But three years," said Monsieur Picot. "Will it still be time? Will Mademoiselle Colleville wait for him?"

"Yes, I swear it," cried the young girl, carried away by an uncontrollable impulse.

And then, blushing with shame, she sat down, melting into tears.

"And you, Mademoiselle Thuillier," continued Picot, "and you, Madame Colleville, will you allow this child to reserve herself for one worthy of her?"

"Yes, yes," cried everybody; for Monsieur Picot's voice, full and sonorous, had tears in it, which filled all present with emotion.

"It is time, then," said Monsieur Picot, "to grant an amnesty

to Providence." Then rushing to the door, where my ear was glued to the keyhole, and where he nearly caught me:

"Announce," said he to me in a very loud voice, "Monsieur Félix Phellion and family."

Thereupon a door opened and five or six persons came out, who were led by Monsieur Picot into the salon.

At the sight of her lover Mademoiselle Colleville fainted, but the spell was soon over, and, seeing Monsieur Félix at her feet, she threw herself, weeping, into Madame Thuillier's arms, crying:

"Godmother, you always told me to hope."

Mademoiselle Thuillier, who, as I have always thought, despite her harsh nature and lack of education, is a very remarkable woman, had a happy inspiration:

"One moment," she said, for they were just starting for the dining-room. "Monsieur Phellion," she said, going up to him, "monsieur and old friend, I ask the hand of Monsieur Félix Phellion for our adopted daughter, Mademoiselle Colleville."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried all in chorus.

"My God!" said Monsieur Félix Phellion, tearfully, "what have I done to deserve so great a happiness!"

"You have been an honest man, and a Christian without knowing it," replied the Abbé Gondrin.

Here la Peyrade flung down the letter.

"Well, you haven't finished it?" said Corentin, picking it up. "But there's not much more: M. Henri informs me that this scene affected him; that knowing I had formerly taken an interest in this marriage, he had thought proper to give me the details of its conclusion, and like all police reports, somewhat extended, he concludes by a slightly veiled demand for a reward. Ah! by the way," resumed Corentin, "there is one detail of some importance:"

The Englishwoman made it known during dinner that, having no heirs, her fortune, after the deaths of herself and husband, will go to Félix, who, as a consequence, will become enormously wealthy.

La Peyrade had risen and was striding rapidly about the room.

"Well, what's the matter?" asked Corentin.

"Nothing," answered the Provençal.

"Yes, there is," replied the detective; "I think you are a little jealous of that young man's good fortune. My dear fellow, allow me to suggest to you that if you wished such a conclusion for yourself, you should have acted as he has done. When I sent you one hundred louis to study law, I did not then intend you as my successor; I expected you to labor at the oars of your own galley, to have the courage for obscure and hard toil; your day would have come. But you choose to violate fortune."

"Monsieur!" said la Peyrade.

"I mean, hastened it—cutting the hay while yet green. You took a fling at journalism; then into business; you made acquaintances of Cérizet and Dutocq; and, frankly, I think you very fortunate in reaching the port in which you have now found a refuge. Besides, you are not of a nature sufficiently simple-hearted to enjoy such bliss as is reserved for Félix Phellion. These middle-classes——"

"These middle-classes," said la Peyrade, quickly; "I know them now, to my cost. They have great absurdities, great vices even; but they have their virtues, or, at the least, very estimable qualities; in them lies the vital force of our corrupt society."

"*Your* society!" said Corentin, smiling; "you speak as if you were still in the ranks. You are struck off the roll, my dear fellow, and you must learn to be more content with your lot; governments pass; societies perish or dwindle; but we—we dominate all things; and the Police is eternal."

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